

Heinz Heitz

# GDR

An historical  
outline



Title of the German edition:  
Heinz Heitzer  
DDR — Geschichtlicher Überblick  
Dietz Verlag Berlin, 1979

143.108 /  
H473  
**Heinz Heitzer**

**GDR**  
**An historical  
outline**

**Verlag Zeit im Bild**  
**Dresden 1981**

The battles of our day  
Are echoes and harbingers  
Of other battles  
What we are fighting out today  
Are differences of long standing  
What we deem a solution now  
Will soon fall short of our expectations  
To meet the challenge of what is  
We must not forget  
What was and is to be

Hermann Kant

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Prof. Heinz Heitzer, born in Zwickau in 1928 of working-class parents, became a "new teacher" after the liberation from Nazism. After graduating from Leipzig University he was a lecturer in history at the local workers' and peasants' faculty. Having been delegated to undertake postgraduate studies he attended the Institute (now Academy) for Social Sciences attached to the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany where he received his doctor's degree and an appointment as a lecturer. Since 1961 he has been with the Central Institute of History at the Academy of Sciences of the GDR, since 1970 as deputy director. Prof. Heitzer has published monographs and contributed to numerous publications, scientific periodicals, anthologies and works of reference on the Napoleonic Wars, the interpretation of history of Marx and Engels and particularly on the history of the GDR and the SED as well as on the debate with bourgeois research on the GDR. He is the co-author and author of standard works of history such as *Klassenkampf, Tradition, Sozialismus. Von den Anfängen der Geschichte des deutschen Volkes bis zur Gestaltung der entwickelten sozialistischen Gesellschaft in der DDR. Grundriß*\* 1974 and 1978 and *Unbewältigte Vergangenheit. Kritik der bürgerlichen Geschichtsschreibung in der BRD*\*\* , 3rd edition 1977. In 1966 he was awarded the National Order of Merit, in 1974 and 1978 the Banner of Labour and in 1979 the National Prize of the GDR

\* (Class struggle, tradition and socialism. From the beginnings of the history of the German people to the development of advanced socialist society in the GDR. Outline.)

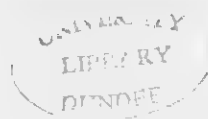
\*\* (The unconquered past. Critique of bourgeois historiography in the FRG.)

Pictures:

ADN-Zentralbild, Berlin, H.-J. Boldt, Berlin, Dietz Verlag Berlin, Photo Archives, Foto-Donath, Herbert Hensky, Institute for Marxism-Leninism attached to the SED Central Committee, Central Party Archives, Kiesling, Kühne-Pressebild, Herbert Lachmann, Leipzig, ND/Murza, Palace of the Republic/Boldt, R. Peter sr EFIAP, Pisarek, Berlin, Klaus Dieter Plewa, Halle, Rössing-Winkler, Leipzig, Ernst Schäfer, Weimar, Horst E. Schulze, Siegfried Thienel, Dresden, Lothar Willmann, German-Soviet Friendship Centre, Berlin

Reproductions:

Dietz Verlag/Renate and Horst Ewald, ADN-Zentralbild, Berlin  
Photos compiled by Elisabeth Lange in collaboration with the author



Verlag Zeit im Bild  
GDR-B012 Dresden  
Julian-Grimau-Allee

Translated by Intertext Berlin

Time of going to press: July 1980

Printed in the German Democratic Republic  
by Grafischer Grossbetrieb Völkerfreundschaft Dresden

0109-2

Introductory note

The history of the German Democratic Republic is meeting with growing interest—in the GDR itself, in other socialist countries and in the emergent nations, as well as in the capitalist world. The reasons are manifold: an endeavour to gain insights from the battles of the past and to draw inspiration from them to meet today's and tomorrow's challenges; a desire to learn more about a friendly country; a concern to make use of the GDR's experiences for one's own struggle; and a quest for an answer to the question as to how this state, which its enemies long maintained would collapse before long (a result they did their best to bring about), managed to win and assert a place among the world's top industrial nations.

To meet this growing interest a number of works have appeared in recent years which either deal directly with the history of the GDR or devote considerable space to the subject. Mention should be made here of the *Geschichte der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands*. Abriß (1978) and the *Grundriss: Klassenkampf, Tradition, Sozialismus. Von den Anfängen der Geschichte des deutschen Volkes bis zur Gestaltung der entwickelten sozialistischen Gesellschaft in der DDR*. (1974 and 1978). Both works reflect the current state of knowledge in GDR historiography, leading right up to the present. Before that a book entitled *DDR. Werden und Wachsen. Zur Geschichte der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* was published in 1974. It is now also available in Russian and Slovak. A team of Soviet historians has written a *History of the German Democratic Republic* (1975 and 1979).

The present historical outline draws upon these works, to which this author has in fact contributed (the Soviet publication excepted), and on further studies. It does not claim to be exhaustive, but purports to give a concise account of events and processes of fundamental importance in the history of the GDR, including its formative years. It is intended for readers with historical interest in the widest sense.

Should it prompt these to seek for more information about the GDR and its history, it will surely have fulfilled its purpose.

The author would like to express his thanks to all those who proffered help and advice in writing this book.

Berlin, July 1980

Heinz Heitzer

## I The antifascist-democratic revolution

1945—1949



### 1. Liberation

The last decisive battle of the Second World War in Europe ended on 2 May 1945 with the surrender in Berlin of the remnants of the Nazi forces. When the red flag was hoisted as a symbol of victory atop the burned-out shell of the Reichstag building, the Nazi state and its army were in a state of total disintegration. On 8 May 1945 the representatives of the Wehrmacht High Command had to sign the unconditional surrender at Berlin-Karlshorst.

The victory of the Soviet Union and her allies in the anti-Hitler coalition freed the German people from the savage dictatorship of fascist German imperialism that had lasted twelve years. The German Reich, which had been founded in 1871 and whose ruling classes had twice set out to conquer the world, went down just as it had come into being: in "blood and iron".

The Second World War, unleashed by German imperialism, had claimed 50 million lives, including 20 million Soviet citizens and 6 million Poles alone. Untold destruction, misery and suffering was what the fascist aggressors had left behind. The material damage was immeasurable. Among the German people, too, the war had taken an enormous toll in human lives and wrought widespread devastation. Six and a half million men and women, children and old people had perished on battlefields and in air raids, in concentration camps and in prisons. Industry, transport and communications had broken down, as had agricultural production in many areas. Many cities and towns had been reduced to a wasteland of rubble. Everywhere there was an acute

shortage of the barest necessities: food, clothing, medicines, water, electricity, and gas. Uncounted people with no roof over their heads were aimlessly roaming about. The spectre of famine and epidemics loomed. "Traffic in the city had come to a standstill," Marshal of the Soviet Union Georgi Zhukov wrote in his memoirs, describing the situation in Berlin after liberation by the Red Army. "More than one-third of all the underground stations had been flooded. The Nazi troops had blown up 225 bridges. The tram cars and overhead cables were almost totally destroyed. The streets were little more than a heap of rubble, especially in the city centre. All public utilities—power stations, gas and water works, and the sewage disposal system—were paralysed.

"The top priority of the Soviet troops stationed in Berlin was to extinguish the fires that were raging everywhere, to make sure the corpses were recovered and buried, and to clear the city of mines. Berlin's population had to be saved from starvation by organizing food supplies which had been discontinued even before the entry of Soviet troops into Berlin."<sup>1</sup>

The picture was much the same in many other areas and towns.

The ideological legacy of Nazism was no less disastrous. While the Nazi régime had collapsed, its evil creed had not disappeared. Chauvinism and anticommunism were still rife in the minds of countless people. Many had believed the lies of the Nazi clique to the last moment. Now they were in a state of despondency and hopelessness.

"What we met was a people in agony. That is the truth." Thus wrote Anton Ackermann, relating his impressions. "They were paralysed by the poison of despair equally weighed down by the traumatic experience of nightly air raids and the other horrors of war, the carefully nurtured fear of Bolshevism and the awareness of their shared responsibility for the fate that had befallen Germany."<sup>2</sup>

The material and spiritual disruption wrought by Nazism was on a colossal scale. Yet the defeat of Nazism

afforded the German people an opportunity to break with the imperialist past once and for all and to embark on the road to democracy and socialism. It is necessary to tell this those bourgeois historians who seek to reduce the defeat of Nazism to a national catastrophe pure and simple.

The opportunity for a new departure in German history stemmed from the radical change in the international constellation of forces brought about by the Second World War, notably as a result of the liberation by the Soviet army; of the mounting strength of socialism, above all the increased power and enhanced international prestige of the Soviet Union; of the new wave of revolutions leading up to the emergence of the world socialist system; of the upsurge in the national liberation movement and the revolutionary labour movement in many countries; and of the weakening of the imperialist system, which entered upon a new stage of its general crisis.

For the German people it was a matter of historic importance that one of the victor powers assuming supreme authority in Germany after the liberation was the socialist Soviet Union, which carried out the joint decisions of the anti-Hitler coalition with great determination. The vital interests of the world's first workers' and peasants' state were in agreement with those of the German people. The Soviet Union granted every possible assistance to the democratic forces among the German people. This made the situation fundamentally different from that obtaining after the First World War.

For another thing, the opportunity for a new departure stemmed from the constellation of forces within Germany itself. German imperialism had suffered the worst defeat in its history. Its military might had been crushed, the political power structure was largely out of action and its economic strength crippled.

How discredited the German monopoly bourgeoisie then was in every place can be seen from a list of leading Nazi and war criminals prepared in early 1945 by the Kilgore Committee, a body set up by the President of the

United States. It included the names of Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach, Friedrich Flick, Hermann Röchling, Wilhelm Zangen and other big business tycoons.

On the other hand, the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), the most uncompromising opponent of German fascism and imperialism, acquitted itself honourably in the hardest test it had ever faced. It had been the only political force to conduct an uninterrupted, organized resistance struggle against the Nazi dictatorship. In the form of the KPD, although it had lost many of its members, the German working class, had, at the end of the Second World War, a tried and tested party of wide experience whose battle-hardened cadres had prepared thoroughly and with circumspection for the work that lay ahead in Germany after liberation. Here again, the situation differed completely from that after the First World War. The Communists were absolutely determined to seize the historic opportunity for initiating the transition from capitalism to socialism in the land which had produced Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. They knew that this depended chiefly on how successful they were in strengthening the party, mobilizing the working class and welding it together. Only when united could the working class become the dominant factor of social development.

A great asset in the fight to bring about a historic change of direction was the costly struggle which the antifascist German resistance movement had been waging, with the KPD playing the most prominent part. While the German people had not managed to overthrow Nazism by its own efforts or make a significant contribution of its own to its liberation, the cooperation among Communists, Social Democrats and bourgeois opponents of Hitler in the antifascist resistance had paved the way for a broadly based antifascist popular front following the victory of the anti-Hitler coalition.

In close touch with the Red Army staffs and commands, Communists, class-conscious Social Democrats and trade unionists who had emerged from clandestinity or had

been freed from concentration camp or prison, took the initiative in setting up action committees and embarking on the democratic reconstruction of the country. They were joined in their endeavour by others who were prepared to lend a hand, including bourgeois opponents of Hitler. In a number of places resistance groups, mostly led by Communists, had even before liberation removed the Nazi administrations and created new, democratic administrations and antifascist provisional committees. Workers had taken control of various industrial enterprises.

Operating in Berlin, Saxony and Mecklenburg were KPD Central Committee groups headed by Walter Ulbricht, Anton Ackermann and Gustav Sobottka, who had been dispatched to Germany before the end of the war by the party leadership, whose headquarters was in Moscow. Maintaining close contact with KPD Chairman Wilhelm Pieck they joined forces with Communists emerging from clandestinity or freed from concentration camps in order to restore life to normal, rebuild the party following its legalization and establish links with social democrats and bourgeois anti-Nazis with a view to enlisting their help in the democratic reconstruction effort. The Communists still in exile were acting along the same lines.

Contrary to what bourgeois historians allege, the collapse of Nazism had not created a vacuum. Faced with new, changed conditions, Communists acting in unison with class-conscious Social Democrats and antifascists from all walks of life set out to achieve those objectives for which the revolutionary German labour movement had been fighting for a hundred years and for which it had already made enormous sacrifices.

Order No. 2 issued by the chief of the Soviet Military Administration, 10 June 1945

# Befehl Nr. 2

## des Obersten Chefs der Sowjetischen Militärischen Administration

10. Juni 1945

Berlin

Am 2. Mai d. J. besetzten die Sowjettruppen Berlin. Die Hitlerarmeen, die Berlin verteidigten, haben kapituliert, und einige Tage darauf hat Deutschland die Urkunde über die bedingungslose militärische Kapitulation unterzeichnet. Am 5. Juni wurde im Namen der Regierungen der Union der Sozialistischen Sowjetrepubliken, der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika, Großbritanniens und Frankreichs die Deklaration über die Niederlage Deutschlands und die Übernahme der Obersten Befehlsgewalt über ganz Deutschland durch die oben genannten Mächte bekanntgegeben. Seit der Besetzung Berlins durch die Sowjettruppen besteht im Gebiet der sowjetischen Besetzungszone in Deutschland feste Ordnung, sind örtliche Organe der Selbstverwaltungen und die nötigen Bedingungen für eine freie gesellschaftliche und politische Betätigung der deutschen Bevölkerung geschaffen worden.

### In Anbetracht des oben Ausgeführten befehle ich:

1. Im Bereich der sowjetischen Besetzungszone in Deutschland die Schaffung und Tätigkeit aller antifaschistischen Parteien zu erlauben, die sich die endgültige Ausrottung der Reste des Faschismus und die Festigung der demokratischen Grundlagen und bürgerlichen Freiheiten in Deutschland zum Ziel setzen und in dieser Richtung die Initiative und freie Betätigung der breiten Massen der Bevölkerung fördern.
2. Der werktätigen Bevölkerung in der sowjetischen Besetzungszone in Deutschland das Recht zur Vereinigung in freie Gewerkschaften und Organisationen zur Wahrung der Interessen und Rechte der Werktätigen einzuräumen. Den Gewerkschaften und Vereinigungen das Recht zur Abschließung kollektiver Verträge mit den Unternehmern sowie zur Organisation von Versicherungskassen und anderen Institutionen gegenseitiger Unterstützung, Kultur-, Aufklärungs- und anderen Bildungs-Vereinigungen und Organisationen zu gewähren.
3. Alle in den Punkten 1 und 2 erwähnten antifaschistischen Parteiorganisationen und freien Gewerkschaften haben ihre Statuten oder die Programme ihrer Tätigkeit in den örtlichen Selbstverwaltungen und bei den militärischen Kommandanten zu registrieren und ihnen gleichzeitig die Listen der Mitglieder ihrer führenden Organe vorzulegen.
4. Festzulegen, daß für die ganze Zeit der Durchführung des Besetzungsregimes die Tätigkeit aller in den Punkten 1 und 2 erwähnten Organisationen unter der Kontrolle der Sowjetischen Militärischen Administration und in Übereinstimmung mit den von ihr herausgegebenen Instruktionen ausgeübt wird.
5. In Übereinstimmung mit oben Dargelegtem sind die ganze faschistische Gesetzgebung und alle faschistischen Beschlüsse, Befehle, Verordnungen, Instruktionen usw., die sich auf die Tätigkeit der antifaschistischen politischen Parteien und freien Gewerkschaften beziehen und gegen die demokratischen Freiheiten, bürgerlichen Rechte und Interessen des deutschen Volkes gerichtet sind, aufzuheben.

Der Oberste Chef der Sowjetischen Militärischen Administration  
Marschall der Sowjetunion **G. K. Shukow**  
Der Stabschef der Sowjetischen Militärischen Administration  
Generalmajor **W. W. Kurasow**

Mindful of the lessons of history, the KPD declared: "The mistakes of 1918 must not be repeated! We must put an end to the divisions among the working people! Nazis and reactionaries must not be treated with leniency!"

Die Partei und insbesondere die Organisationsleitung ist sich der Bedeutung der Arbeit der Frauen in der Partei und in der Bewegung bewusst. Die Partei hat die Aufgabe, die Frauen in der Bewegung zu organisieren und zu führen. Die Partei hat die Aufgabe, die Frauen in der Bewegung zu organisieren und zu führen. Die Partei hat die Aufgabe, die Frauen in der Bewegung zu organisieren und zu führen.

Never again must there be hatred and enmity towards the Soviet Union for wherever such hatred manifests itself, imperialist reaction is rearing its head!"<sup>3</sup> The KPD demanded that fascism and militarism be destroyed root and branch and that monopoly and landed interests be eliminated. It said that representatives of the working people should assume the commanding heights of the state and the economy. The KPD advocated the establishment of a republic with a democratic parliamentary system that would grant the people all rights and freedoms. With a view to healing the wounds of the war, it submitted concrete proposals for overcoming hunger, unemployment and homelessness and for safeguarding the social rights of working people. The KPD called on all those willing to help in the reconstruction effort to join together under the leadership of the united working class.

The KPD manifesto showed that the party was guided by Lenin's theory of revolution, notably his perceptions of the connection between the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism. It had much in common with the action programmes of sister parties in many other countries. It reflected the resolutions of the 7th World Congress of the Communist International—held in 1935—and the Brussels and Berne party conferences of the KPD held in 1935 and 1939, respectively. The KPD directed the main thrust of its policy against fascism and militarism and their social foundations. It mobilized the working people for the solution of the most urgent problems of the day while not losing sight of the great objective, which was to do away with imperialism and create antifascist and democratic conditions that would open the way to socialism for the German people. Under the then prevailing circumstances the consistent implementation of the antifascist-democratic reformation was tantamount to taking the first and only possible step in the direction of socialism.

The KPD manifesto, which soon gained currency in all zones of occupation, instilled fresh hope in many people. In the *Deutsche Volkszeitung*, the central organ of the KPD, Thomas Mann wrote on 16 June 1945:

# Die Volkszeitung TAGESZEITUNG DER SOZIALDEMOKRATISCHEN PARTEI DEUTSCHLANDS Nr. 1. JAHRGANG BERLIN, DONNERSTAG, 7. JULI 1945 PREIS 15 PFENNIG

## Wille und Weg

Von Otto Gumbel

Verantwortl. Redakteur: Dr. Otto Gumbel

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## Vom Chaos zur Ordnung

Aufruf der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands

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Aufruf der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands

Manifesto of the SPD Central Committee, 15 June 1945

"Great is the calamity that has befallen us. But it would be foolish and pusillanimous to say that this is the end of Germany. Germany can live and be happy without a general staff and without an arms industry. Without these she can live more decently and more honourably. Again, she can live and be happy without the lands in both East and West which will be taken away from her now that her empire, conquered by war, has crumbled to dust. Even so this remains a specious and beautiful land, capable of great cultural achievements, which can rely on the resourcefulness of its people and on the world's assistance and which, once the worst is over, may look forward to an existence rich in achievement and esteem."

The majority of Social Democrats had, on the strength of bitter experience, come to the conclusion that a new path had to be chosen, that the establishment of working-class unity was the demand of the hour. This attitude found its reflection in the manifesto adopted by the Berlin Central Committee of the SPD, headed by Otto Grotewohl and Max Fechner, on 15 June 1945. Many of the demands listed in the manifesto were identical or similar to those expressed in the action programme of the KPD.

The large measure of common ground that existed on basic objectives and demands made it possible for the KPD and SPD leaderships to conclude an agreement on joint action on 19 June. In it the two parties pledged to work closely together in rebuilding the country on antifascist and democratic lines and to hold joint meetings and consultations to clarify ideological questions. In line with the recommendations contained in the agreement, action committees of the KPD and SPD came into existence at all levels—from factory and neighbourhood branches to the regional executives. In the western zones, too, organizations of the two parties reached agreement on joint action in many towns and areas.

The principles of antifascist-democratic reconstruction were endorsed by the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions (FDGB), which at the time of its first congress in February 1946 had a membership of over two

million, the antifascist youth committees which in March 1946 merged to form the Free German Youth (FDJ), the women's committees, which in March 1947 were superseded by the Women's Democratic Federation of Germany (DFD), and other mass organizations. Especially in the trade unions and in the FDJ, whose respective chairmen were the Communists Hans Jendretzky and Erich Honecker, Communists and Social Democrats were co-operating very closely.

Demands of an antifascist-democratic nature were also put forward by the newly formed bourgeois-democratic parties: the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU) and the Liberal Democratic Party of Germany. These demands, often spelled out more clearly at the local level, and the activities of dedicated democrats within the CDU and LDPD such as Otto Nuschke and Wilhelm Külz, were seen by the KPD and SPD as the basis for cooperation even though reactionary politicians who were contemplating little more than a new version of the Weimar Republic initially held key positions in the bourgeois-democratic parties.

Taking up a proposal made by the Communists, the KPD, SPD, CDU and LDPD agreed on 14 July 1945 to set up a solid united front. While retaining their independence, the four parties committed themselves to a common goal: rebuilding the country on antifascist and democratic lines and establishing friendly ties with all nations. A Central Committee on which each party was represented by five members became the coordinating centre for their cooperation. It was agreed that all decisions and recommendations should be adopted unanimously. The founding communiqué recommended setting up similar committees at all levels. In the committees which were subsequently formed the working class, acting in unison with its allies, held the leading role.

With its Bloc policy the KPD was acting up to the principles for a popular front policy that had been evolved by the 7th World Congress of the Communist International

and variously applied by numerous Marxist-Leninist parties. Cooperation within the Bloc of antifascist-democratic parties went a long way towards asserting the leading role of the working class and drawing the peasantry, the intelligentsia and parts of the non-monopolistic bourgeoisie into the antifascist-democratic transformation. It provided favourable opportunities for supporting the progressive forces within the bourgeois-democratic parties and isolating reactionary politicians.

Thus began the rallying of the forces committed to antifascist-democratic change in the Soviet zone of occupation.

### 3. The resolutions of Potsdam

From 17 July to 2 August 1945 Schloss Cecilienhof near Potsdam was the scene of a summit meeting of three heads of government: J. V. Stalin for the USSR, Harry S. Truman for the United States and Winston Churchill for the United Kingdom. After the election victory of the Labour Party in Britain, the latter was replaced by Clement R. Attlee. The purpose of the conference was to lay the foundations of a stable structure of peace in Europe, building on previous arrangements of the anti-Hitler coalition. The German problems played a central role. After protracted negotiations, which on the part of the Soviet delegation were being conducted with firmness of principle and patience, the conference agreed on fundamental measures that would lead to the demilitarization, de-Nazification and democratization of Germany. The arms industry and the monopolies were to be dismantled, and an economy devoted to peaceful purposes built up. The great powers pledged support for the German people in establishing a unitary, democratic state. They agreed in principle on Germany's eastern frontiers, stipulating that the German-Polish border should run the length of the Oder and Lusatian Neisse rivers and that the northern part of East Prussia, including Königsberg, should be

come part of the Soviet Union. Decisions regarding the resettlement of Germans living in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary underlined the definitive nature of the agreement reached. The German people were placed under the obligation to pay reparations in order to repair part of the damage wrought in their name by the Nazi invaders.

The Potsdam Agreement, to which France acceded later while making a few reservations, created internationally valid foundations for the struggle of the German antifascists. Therefore, the Bloc of antifascist-democratic parties in Berlin issued a joint statement hailing these resolutions as the beginning of a new road. By contrast, leading politicians of the bourgeois parties and social-democratic leaders in the western zones rejected the Potsdam Agreement from the word go. They were primarily opposed to the stipulations relating to borders and reparations, alleging that the agreement was the exclusive affair of the occupation powers and without binding force for German politicians. This attitude was in flagrant contradiction to international law, but it has nevertheless been maintained by bourgeois historians and experts on constitutional and international law to this day. What the reactionary forces feared most of all was the provision that the social causes of fascism and militarism be removed, because this would have thwarted their plans of restoring German imperialism to power. In order to sidetrack attention from this objective they attacked the resolutions of Potsdam from an anticommunist angle. "If these resolutions had really been carried out," Konrad Adenauer later wrote in his Memoirs, "... the three Western zones, too, the whole of Germany that is, would have gone communist."<sup>4</sup>

The Potsdam Agreement occupied a central place in the policies of the Soviet Union and the German antifascists. It was a document that was basic to the struggle for the establishment of a stable post-war order in Europe and for the settlement of the German problems. It formulated the aims the major powers of the anti-Hitler coalition intended to pursue with their occupation of Germany.

However, the western powers went about implementing the resolutions of Potsdam in a perfunctory and inconsistent fashion, then disregarded them more and more and ultimately sabotaged them altogether. The breach of the Potsdam Agreement was a clear sign that the USA and its allies were moving towards a policy of cold war against socialism.

The departure from the principles adopted in Potsdam made it possible for the reactionary forces in the western zones of occupation to realign themselves. The upshot was that in these zones the process of antifascist-democratic renewal did not go beyond its initial stages and that before long the risk of a division of the country loomed ever larger.

The KPD stressed that the implementation of the Potsdam Agreement afforded the German people an opportunity to resume its place among the peace-loving nations of the world. It did not conceal the fact that the German people bore part of the blame for Nazism and war, underlining its obligation to help make good the damage. With unflagging energy, often swimming against the tide, the Communists explained why the territorial adjustments, the resettlement of Germans, the reparations and the dismantling of industrial plant as well as other provisions of the Potsdam Agreement that involved hardships and complications, were necessary and justified.

By the same token, the KPD was the only German party which in the spirit of the resolutions of Potsdam pushed vigorously for the establishment of antifascist and democratic conditions in all zones of occupation, thereby opening the way for a unitary democratic state. As the KPD conference meeting in Berlin in early March 1946 emphasized, the antifascist-democratic regeneration of the whole of Germany "lays the foundations of the unity of Germany and the safeguarding of peace."<sup>5</sup> The imperialist policy of occupation which encouraged the reactionary forces in the western zones and put the unity of the country in jeopardy prompted the Communists to press even more forcefully for antifascist-democratic

changes in all zones of occupation and to take a firm stand against all separatist and particularist aspirations.

#### 4. Antifascist-democratic organs of state

Local administrative departments run by civilians had already been created in the areas liberated by the Red Army in late April and early May 1945. These first antifascist organs of state were being set up with strong support from the Soviet town commandants, and often on their initiative. The commandants appointed Communists, Social Democrats and other antifascists to serve as mayors, *Landräte* (chief administrative officer of a district), and commissioners for police and judicial affairs. They worked closely with the German antifascists, helping them to cope with the multitude of problems they were facing in bringing life back to normal. A report from a district of the former province of Brandenburg noted: "It is no small achievement to have set everything in motion again within such a short period of time ... But it must not go unmentioned here that this has only been possible thanks to the aid of the Red Army, for what would have come of it all if we had not been able to count on our commandant to lend us a helping hand."<sup>6</sup>

From May to July new organs of state were set up throughout the Soviet zone of occupation, from the local and district level to that of the provincial administrations. On 19 May 1945 the commandant of Greater Berlin, Col.-Gen. Nikolai Berzarin, installed a democratic City Council headed by an engineer without party affiliations, Dr Arthur Werner, as Chief Burgomaster. The composition of the City Council, which comprised Communists, Social Democrats and bourgeois opponents of Hitler, and its mode of operation were illustrative of the new organs of power in the Soviet zone of occupation.

In conjunction with the Soviet occupation authorities the officials serving on the new administrative de-



partments worked to restore life to normal and to get production going again. They organized the struggle against hunger and cold, misery and homelessness. They purged the administration and the economy of Nazis and war criminals. They initiated a far-reaching reform of the judicial system, dismantled the old police apparatus and enlisted class-conscious workers to create a democratic police force committed to the interests of the working people.

In July the chief of the SMAD endorsed the list of appointments for the provincial administrations of Brandenburg, Mecklenburg, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia that had been proposed by the antifascist-democratic parties. Chosen as presidents were the Social Democrats Karl Steinhoff, Wilhelm Höcker and Rudolf Friedrichs, the Liberal Democrat Erhard Hübener and an independent, Rudolf Paul. Of the 18 vice-presidents appointed, six belonged to the KPD, four to the SPD and five to the bourgeois-democratic parties, whilst three were not members of any party.

On 27 July 1945 the SMAD ordered the establishment of central administrative departments charged with the task of coordinating developments in key sectors of national life throughout the Soviet zone of occupation. Departments were set up to deal with transport, communications, fuel supplies, trade and distribution, manufacturing, agriculture, finance, employment and social security, health, education and judicial matters. At a later stage there followed central departments concerned with resettlers' affairs and with foreign and interzonal trade and the German Administration of the Interior. All these were consultative bodies of the SMAD which unlike the provincial administrations were not empowered to enact laws or decrees. The chief administrative officers included not only tried and tested Communists such as Edwin Hoernle (agriculture) and Paul Wandel (education), but also bourgeois specialists such as Eugen Schiffer (judicial matters), a former cabinet minister.

The KPD considered that the establishment of new

organs of state was the most important political move and the prime condition for transforming the country along antifascist and democratic lines. Its clarity of vision and close cooperation with the SPD provided the guarantee for the working class to assert its leading role in these organs despite the resistance offered by reactionary bourgeois politicians and administrators.

The key elements of the imperialist state apparatus—the army, the police and the government bureaucracy—had already been crushed by the military victory of the Red Army. But this did not mean that the power machinery as a whole, with its multiple ramifications, had been destroyed. What was now coming into being was organs of power of a new quality, rooted in the people and embodying the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants in alliance with other sections of the population. The consistently anti-imperialist nature of the new state opened up the prospect of peaceful evolution towards the dictatorship of the proletariat without civil war and armed conflict.

If the establishment of new organs of state proved very complicated, this was not only because of the difficult post-war conditions, but also because most of the government officials drawn from the ranks of the working people lacked experience in administrative work. So it was all the more important to give them suitable training for their jobs. Accordingly, schools of administration were set up at the provincial level in 1946, plus a financial school and a central transport school.

That the Soviet-occupied zone and the western zones were moving in different directions became strikingly apparent in the question of state power, the pivotal issue in any revolutionary process. While in the Soviet zone Communists, Social Democrats and other antifascists, together with the SMAD, created new organs of power rooted in the people and used them in the best interests of the working population to remould society, the military authorities in the western zones, in league with reactionary bourgeois politicians and right-wing Social

Democrat leaders, ensured that the old civil service remained largely intact and that key positions were occupied by opponents of an antifascist-democratic course of development. Since the working class was kept away from the commanding heights of the state, it did not succeed in its attempt to remove the social foundations of fascism and militarism.

## 5. The democratic land reform

The KPD looked upon the peasantry as the most important ally of the working class. To forge this alliance, the Communists pointed out, was one of the prime conditions for the success of the antifascist-democratic reformation.

The Junkers with their immense landed wealth had long been a stronghold of reaction. Together with the industrial and banking magnates, they and other big landowners had been the main sponsors and beneficiaries of the Nazis régime. In addition, fascist agrarian policy and war had driven agriculture to the brink of ruin. The situation required drastic measures: a revolutionary transformation of rural life.

Growing numbers of peasants and farm labourers, encouraged by vigorous campaigning on the part of the KPD, took up the slogan "Junkers' lands in peasant hands!" and pressed for a democratic land reform. The KPD and the SPD reached agreement on the principles that were to govern an revolutionary transformation of agriculture and enlisted the cooperation of representatives of bourgeois-democratic parties. Reactionary leaders of these parties who came out against a thoroughgoing land reform found themselves isolated and were relieved of their duties.

On 3 September 1945 the provincial administration of Saxony-Anhalt decreed a democratic land reform. This served as a model for similar measures adopted by the other provincial administrations. The implementation of

# Demokratische Bodendreform

Auftrag der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands

Schaffendes Volk in Stadt und Land!

Männer und Frauen! Deutsche Jugend!

Die Kollaboration, in der unser deutsches Volk durch die Hitlerherrschaft und den zweiten Weltkrieg gequält wurde, hat sich besonders verheerend auf die deutsche Landwirtschaft, auf das Leben der deutschen Bauern und Landarbeiters ausgewirkt. Der größte Teil der deutschen Bauernwirtschaft wurde durch die Zerstörung der Wirtschaft des Mittelstandes und durch die Hitlerkollaboration dem völligen Ruin nahegebracht. Ungezogen gibt die Not der deutschen Landarbeiters, der kleinen Bauern und Pächter. Noch größer aber ist die Not der deutschen Bauern, die wegen der rüuberischen Wirtschaftspolitik der Hitlerherrschaft zu Grunde gegangen sind.

Die Hitlerherrschaft hatte für das Ziel, in Auftrag der deutschen Monopolbourgeoisie und der feudal-junkertlichen Großgrundbesitzer den Krieg herbeizuführen.

Die anderen Völker sollten unterjocht und ihre Länder ausgeplündert werden. Unser Volk wurde von Hitler in diesen verhängnisvollen Krieg hineingetrieben, durch den es sich selbst in das größte Unglück stürzte.

Die faschistisch-kriegsverbrecher sind deshalb auf das strengste zu bestrafen. Insbesondere durch die Beschlagnahme ihres Grundbesitzes und ihres gesamten Vermögens.

Es gilt für unser Volk, die ersten Schritte zu setzen, um die Plünderungen zu beenden. Eine schwere Schuld, die Hitler dem deutschen Volk aufgeladen hat, muß getilgt werden.

Niemals mehr darf es den Kriegsverbrechern gelingen, unser Volk für ihre rüuberischen Ziele zu geizen.

Die Not der schaffenden Landvolks hat ihre bisher bestmögliche Forderung nach einer geordneten Bodenverteilung durch die Beseitigung des feudal-junkertlichen Großgrundbesitzes und die Landesteilung an landlose Bauern, Landarbeiter, landlose Bauern, kleine Pächter und Umsiedler auf die Tagesordnung gestellt.

In zahlreichen Versammlungen fordern die Bauern, daß der Boden der Hände von den Junkern und Feudalherren endgültig gerückt werde, wieder Bauernland wird.

Diese Bauernforderung hat bereits in einer Verordnung der Provinzialverwaltung der Provinz Sachsen und der vertriebenen Ostprovinzen ihren gesetzlichen Niederschlag gefunden. Der alte Traum der Bauern, das Junkerland in Bauernhand zu bringen, wird Wirklichkeit.

Bei der demokratischen Bodendreform wird der schwerste Schlag gegen den Hitlerfaschismus und den Militarismus, gegen den feudal-junkertlichen Großgrundbesitz geführt.

Was in Jahrhunderten Klagen der Bauern um ihre Befreiung, was in den revolutionären Kämpfen des Jahres 1918 nach gelang, was im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland in der Weimarer Republik von der Reaktion verhindert wurde, wird jetzt nach der Zerschlagung der Hitlerherrschaft verwirklicht.

Der Herrschaft der Junkerherrschaft, die Grundbesitzer, die in Deutschland die wichtigste Voraussetzung für die demokratische Lagestellung Deutschlands geschaffen.

Somit ist die demokratische Bodendreform für unser deutsches Volk von der größten historischen Bedeutung.

Jeder wahrheitsdemokratische und antifaschistische Mann muß sich deshalb mit aller Energie für die durchgreifende und beschleunigte Bodendreform, für die entschließungsfähige Forderung des Grundbesitzes und der Vermögen der Junker und Feudalherren einsetzen.

Die Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands hat seit ihrer Gründung im Jahre 1918 immer wieder für die Forderungen der Bauern und Landarbeiter gekämpft. Der von der Hitlerherrschaft ermordete Führer der Kommunistischen Partei, Ernst Thälmann, war ein echter Freund der deutschen Bauern und Landarbeiters. Das von ihm entwickelte Bauernprogramm sollte dazu beitragen, der Not der kleinen Bauern und Landarbeiters ein Ende zu machen. Er suchte das enge Kampfbündnis zwischen den Bauern und Arbeiters herbeizuführen, um der gemeinsamen Not ein Ende zu machen und den ewigen Kriegselementen und Kriegsverbrechern das Handwerk zu legen.

Somit nach Zerschlagung der Hitlerherrschaft durch den Sieg der alliierten Mächte hat die Kommunistische Partei wieder ihre alte Bauernforderung in ihrem Aktionsprogramm vom 11. Juni dieses Jahres wiederholt.

„Liquidierung des Großgrundbesitzes, der großen Güter der Junker, Grafen und Fürsten und Übergabe ihres ganzen Grund und Bodens sowie des lebenden und toten Inventars an die Provinzial- und Landesverwaltungen zur Zuteilung an die durch den Krieg ruinierten und bedrängten Bauern.“

Der Boden soll in das Privateigentum der Bauern und Landarbeiters übergehen.

Die Kommunistische Partei nimmt aufstichtend mit den Bauern und Landarbeiters überein, daß sie von der Herrschaft der Junker und Großgrundbesitzer in Dunkelheit und zu freien Herren auf ihre Scholle werden sollen. Der Grundbesitz und die Wirtschaft der Großbauern sollen von der Enteignung und Aufhebung nicht berührt werden.

KPD appeal for a democratic land reform, 8 September 1945

the reform was in the hands of land reform commissions elected by a democratic procedure. They consisted of about 50,000 industrial workers, farm labourers, smallholders and other working people, including numerous resettlers. Some 12,500 were Communists, over 9,000 Social Democrats and close to 1,000 members of the CDU and LDPD, while the majority—about 30,000—had no party affiliations. The land reform commissions were vigorously supported by class-conscious workers and the newly created organs of state, notably the Central Administration for Agriculture and Forestry.

All landowners with holdings exceeding 100 hectares (247 acres) were expropriated without compensation. Similarly, all landed property held by Nazi activists and war criminals plus their entire assets and live and dead stock, were confiscated. The proportion of land subject to expropriation was highest in Mecklenburg and Brandenburg where it accounted for respectively 54 and 41 per cent of the total farming area. A total of 2.2 million hectares of land was parcelled out among 120,000 farm labourers and landless peasants, 165,000 smallholders, 91,000 resettlers and others. The newly created or enlarged holdings were between 5 and 10 hectares in size.

Roughly one-third of the land remained in the hands of administrative departments or was made available to the Farmers' Mutual Aid Association, a democratic mass organization of the peasantry. The period that followed saw the establishment of machine hiring stations and state farms. Being working-class bases in the countryside, these played an important role in strengthening the worker-peasant alliance. The machine hiring stations and state farms formed the nucleus of a future socialist sector in agriculture.

In much the same way as the agrarian reforms carried out in the people's democracies, the land reform was an anti-imperialist and democratic revolution in rural life enforced through mass action with the working class as the leading force. A demand which the peasantry had raised for centuries—that the land be given to those who

till it—was thus fulfilled and the alliance between the working class and the peasantry placed on a solid basis. If the peasants' families are included, some two million people were directly involved in this revolutionary process. Many of them acquired new self-confidence, gained access to political life and began to put their faith in the working class and the newly formed democratic organs of state.

The land reform spelled the end of the *Junkers* as a class, destroying a bastion of Prusso-German militarism. There were no longer any huge, privately owned estates which had previously accounted for one third of all land. By contrast, the proportion of peasant farmers with holdings between 0.5 and 20 hectares in size climbed from 40 per cent (the 1939 figure) to 70 per cent. Farmers owning medium-sized holdings were now predominant in the rural community.

Once the land reform had been completed, the most important task was to help the newly established farms to consolidate their position. There was a general lack of housing, stables, sheds, livestock and implements. The local authorities, the Farmers' Mutual Aid Associations and workers from industry provided every possible aid, as did the Soviet occupation authorities which often supplied horses and seed stock. Taking up proposals by German antifascists the SMAD, in its Order No. 209 issued in September 1947, decreed that at least 37,000 homes and outbuildings be set up for new farmers. This target had been largely attained by the end of 1948. Loans were extended to new farmers on favourable terms, and extensive measures were introduced to subsidize agricultural products and fertilizer.

Thanks to their own efforts and to the substantial support they received, the new farmers were able to consolidate their position, with a resultant gradual rise in output. The "collapse of agriculture" which had been predicted by the enemies of agrarian reform did not materialize. But the class struggle in the rural areas continued, sometimes taking on fierce proportions. Big farm-

# Aufruf zur demokratischen Schulreform

An alle Eltern, Lehrer und Hochschullehrer!

Nicht ausschließlich Leben stehen wir am Ende der autoritären Schulreform. Wir stehen am Anfang einer neuen Epoche. In der Demokratie gibt es keine Autorität und physischen Zwang. Unsere Aufgabe besteht darin, die Bildung umzugestalten. Unsere Aufgabe besteht darin, die Bildung umzugestalten. Unsere Aufgabe besteht darin, die Bildung umzugestalten.

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ers exploited the difficulties resettlers and smallholders were facing to create a relationship of dependence. For years to come it was a common saying in parts of Thuringia that peasants had to work an entire week for a big farmer to get permission to use his tractor for a single day. In many places reactionary big farmers, former bailiffs and other elements opposed to progress had the upper hand in the rural trading cooperatives and often wielded a measure of influence in the mutual aid associations as well. Therefore, strenuous efforts were needed in order to consolidate the gains of the land reform and to press on with the democratization of rural life.

## 6. The beginnings of cultural regeneration

As early as 28 April, with heavy fighting still in progress in the centre of Berlin, the Soviet city commandant gave permission to reopen theatres, cinemas and sports grounds in the liberated parts of the city. Within five days of the unconditional surrender, on 13 May 1945, Radio Berlin went on the air under the direction of antifascists. Soon afterwards the first democratic newspapers made their appearance. And so what few had deemed possible became a reality: A rich cultural life began to evolve in the Soviet zone of occupation in the midst of ruins and despite the most arduous material conditions.

Communists active in the cultural field took the initiative in gathering together all democratic and humanist forces from the ranks of the intelligentsia, working closely with social democratic and progressive bourgeois writers, artists and scholars. In July/August 1945 the Cultural League for the Democratic Renewal of Germany was founded with the poet Johannes R. Becher as its first president.

In view of the havoc which imperialist ideology had wrought in the course of several decades the Communists considered spiritual and cultural regeneration to be one of the foremost tasks in the process of antifascist-demo-

The joint appeal of the KPD and SPD for a democratic school reform bears the signatures of Wilhelm Pieck and Otto Grotewohl

Zentralkomitee der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands  
W. Pieck

Zentralrat der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands  
Otto Grotewohl

## ARBEITER- UND BAUERNKINDER AN DIE UNIVERSITÄT!

Die Zusammensetzung der Studentenschaft muß ein Spiegelbild des gesamten Volkes sein. Das Unrecht, das weiten Volkskreisen aus sozialen und politischen Gründen zugefügt wurde, ist wiedergutzumachen.

Dieses Ziel zu erreichen, ist Aufgabe des

### Ausschusses zur Förderung des Studiums der Arbeiter und Bauern Berlin/Brandenburg

Für die Zulassung zum Studium ist die Hochschulreife erforderlich.

#### Wie können Nichtabiturienten zum Studium gelangen?

Begabte Arbeiter- und Bauernkinder, die keine Oberschule besucht haben, können durch den Besuch der **Vorstudienanstalt Berlin** die Hochschulreife erwerben.

#### Wer kann zur Vorstudienanstalt zugelassen werden?

Personen zwischen 18 und 30 Jahren, die in der Vergangenheit aus politischen, wirtschaftlichen oder rassistischen Gründen die Hochschulreife nicht erwerben konnten.

Die Bewerber müssen mindestens eine abgeschlossene Volksschulbildung oder die mittlere Reife besitzen; sie müssen sich für ein bestimmtes Studienfach entschieden haben und sich besonders dafür eignen.

#### Aufnahmeprüfung

Vor der Zulassung findet eine Prüfung statt, die sich auf die fachliche und politische Eignung bezieht.

#### Dauer der Vorbereitung an der Vorstudienanstalt

Die Kurse laufen je nach den Vorkenntnissen über eine Zeildauer von einem bis zu zwei Jahren.

#### Ist Erwerbstätigkeit neben dem Vorstudium möglich?

Nein! Die Vorbereitung erfordert die ganze Kraft der Schüler. Zu den 34 Unterrichtsstunden je Woche kommen noch die Arbeitsgemeinschaften und die häuslichen Arbeiten.

Leaflet of a committee urging that the universities be thrown open to the children of workers and peasants, 1947

cratic transformation. They demanded that democratic and socialist culture, hitherto oppressed, be elevated to a status of preeminence. It was imperative to free all cultural institutions from the influence of reactionary forces and to place them in the hands of the people and to banish all fascist and militarist thinking.

The democratic school reform carried out in 1945–46 on the initiative of the KPD was the most thorough-going move towards a spiritual and cultural renewal. Not only did it purge the education system of perverse fascist and militarist doctrines and their exponents, but it also did away with the educational privileges the propertied classes had enjoyed for centuries. It gave rise to a uniform democratic type of school administered by the state in both urban and rural areas. A basic demand of the revolutionary labour movement and progressive teachers was thus fulfilled.

Replacing the bulk of the teaching force, which was an absolute necessity, proved an especially difficult problem. At war's end there were 39,000 teachers on the territory of the Soviet-occupied zone, of whom 28,000 had been members of the Nazi party. They were dismissed. Taking their place were 40,000 so-called "new teachers" drawn from the working class and other sections of the working population. These acquired the necessary qualifications through classroom practice, crash courses and independent study. The vast majority of new teachers acquitted themselves well, not only in the field of education, but also in other spheres of social life.

In the newly-opened universities and colleges, all influences of fascism were erased. The greater part of university teachers—for example, 170 out of 222 at Leipzig University—had to be dismissed for having been docile tools of the Nazi régime. Yet even those who remained were wedded to bourgeois views. As far as the student population was concerned, only a tiny minority had a working-class background. Courses were instituted in early 1946 to prepare working men and women without secondary education for university study.

A new publishing sector came into being. After years of isolation and Nazi barbarity in the cultural field, the working people were once again given an opportunity to acquire the treasures of world culture. The writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin, the literary works written by antifascist German authors in exile, and the masterpieces of Russian and Soviet literature began to gain currency on a massive scale. Many cultural figures who had been persecuted or forced into exile by the Nazis, such as Bertolt Brecht, Willi Bredel, Hanns Eisler, Lea Grundig, Wolfgang Langhoff, Ludwig Renn, Anna Seghers, Erich Weinert, Friedrich Wolf, and Arnold Zweig, returned to place their energies and talents at the service of a spiritual regeneration. The DEFA film company began its activities under the direction of antifascists. It produced outstanding films remarkable for their settling of accounts with the Nazi and militarist past, eg. "Marriage in the Shadows" and "Die Buntkarierten" by Kurt Maetzig, and "The Murderers are Among Us" and "Rotation" by Wolfgang Staudte.

The Soviet occupation authorities played an important part in the struggle for a spiritual and cultural renewal. It was with their support that museums, universities and colleges, and the Academy of Sciences were reopened. Cultural and education officers and members of the SMAD Information Department led by S. I. Tulpanov deserve special credit for helping the German working people to recognize the barbaric nature of fascist ideology and to absorb humanist ideas and the scientific view of the world of the working class. They communicated to them the experience of the CPSU and the achievements of Russian and Soviet culture and art. In this way it became possible gradually to overcome deeply rooted anti-Soviet views. A contributing factor was the founding in 1947 of the Society for the Study of the Culture of the Soviet Union renamed the German-Soviet Friendship Society in 1949. Jürgen Kuczynski was elected its first president.

## 7. The founding of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany

Unity of action between the KPD and SPD grew stronger and stronger in the joint battle to transform the country along antifascist and democratic lines. The experience of revolutionary practice, the widespread publishing and publicizing by the KPD of fundamental classical works of Marxism-Leninism and numerous joint discussions aided the process of ideological clarification that was under way. A growing number of Social Democrats became convinced that reformist attitudes and practices were of no help. As for the Communists, they had to shed reservations which had their origin in decades of disunity and in the harmful role played by right-wing Social Democrat leaders.

The struggle to achieve working-class unity in political and organizational terms grew into a mass movement involving not only KPD and SPD members, but also numerous working people with no party affiliation. In factories and in the trade unions in particular, demands for a united revolutionary working-class party became steadily more insistent.

Yet in a parallel development, the incorrigible opponents of revolutionary working-class unity within the Social Democratic Party stepped up their resistance. They were receiving support from the western zones and from the western sectors of Berlin. In the western zones an opportunist group headed by the fanatic anticommunist Kurt Schumacher had managed, with the aid of the imperialist occupation powers, to bring the Social Democratic party organizations under their sway. In Berlin's western sectors, too, right-wing opportunist politicians contrived to secure all key positions in the party with support from the imperialist occupation powers. The opponents of unity relentlessly purged the party organizations under their control of any member committed to working-class unity. At the same time, they slanderously alleged that the union of KPD and SPD was being brought

about by force. This served as a basis for all subsequent falsifications of the early history of the SED by bourgeois historians.

In the Soviet zone of occupation the movement for unity prevailed despite all resistance. In March and April 1946 unification took place from the bottom upwards in all provinces under a democratic voting procedure. Communists and Social Democrats would first take separate votes on the unification issue, then hold joint meetings, set up factory, local, district and provincial organizations and elect leading committees consisting of an equal number of former KPD and SPD members.

After the 15th KPD Congress and the 40th SPD Congress had unanimously come out in favour of unification, the KPD and the SPD merged at the Unification Congress held in what is now Berlin's Metropol Theatre on 21-22 April 1946 to form the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED). The delegates present were representing 620,000 Communists and 680,000 Social Democrats. Wilhelm Pieck and Otto Grotewohl were elected chairmen of the party.

Wilhelm Pieck, born in Guben in 1876 and a joiner by trade, joined the trade union movement in 1894 and the SPD one year later. Before long, he was entrusted with senior party and trade union posts in Bremen. In 1910 he came to Berlin, where he fought alongside Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg against imperialism, opportunism and imperialist war. He joined the Spartacus group and became a co-founder of the KPD, having remained one of its leaders ever since. As a KPD deputy to the Prussian Landtag and to the Reichstag, he championed the interests of the working class. From 1928 he held senior positions in the Executive Committee of the Communist International. In 1933 Wilhelm Pieck received instructions from the party to go into exile. The Brussels Conference of the KPD in 1935 elected him party chairman for the duration of Ernst Thälmann's imprisonment. In 1943 he helped to found the "Free Germany" National Committee. While in exile and upon his return to Berlin

# Grundsätze und Ziele der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands

Die Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands ist die politische Partei der Arbeiter, der Bauern, der Intelligenz und der Jugend in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik. Sie ist die einzige Partei, die die Interessen der gesamten Bevölkerung vertritt und die Einheit der Nation fördert.

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## In diesem Zeichen werden wir siegen!

Principles and objectives of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany as adopted at the Unification Congress of the KPD and SPD, April 1946

in July 1945, Wilhelm Pieck worked unremittingly for a union of all opponents of Hitler. He played a crucial part in the unification of the KPD and the SPD, for which the workers awarded him the sobriquet of "architect of unity".

Otto Grotewohl, born in Brunswick in 1894 and a printer by trade, joined both the SPD and the trade unions in 1912. The province of Brunswick remained his main field of activity for many years. After the First World War he worked there as a journalist, deputy, minister and regional chairman of the SPD. He was elected a deputy to the Reichstag in 1925. The Nazis persecuted him and imprisoned him several times. From his bitter experience at the hands of the Nazi dictatorship he drew the conclusion that the highest priority had to be given to overcoming the split in the working-class movement. As chairman of the SPD Central Committee, therefore, he devoted all his energies to this aim.

Wilhelm Pieck and Otto Grotewohl were bound together not only by shared objectives, but also by mutual respect and esteem which grew into a close friendship. In 1954 Otto Grotewohl penned these lines in a book dedicated to Wilhelm Pieck: "If our paths had not crossed, all would certainly not have gone so well. Your experience, your composure, and firmness, your goodness and wisdom have gone far towards enabling me to accomplish the tasks before us."<sup>7</sup>

The first programme of the SED, the "Principles and Aims of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany" adopted at the unification congress, pointed the way to socialism which it said could be achieved by forging ahead with the process of antifascist-democratic change. The SED declared: "The aim of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany is to do away with any form of exploitation and oppression, with economic crises, poverty, unemployment and the threat of imperialist war. This aim ... can only be attained through socialism."<sup>8</sup> It described the conquest of political power by the working class as the prime condition for the building of socialism. The SED placed

# NEUES DEUTSCHLAND

ZENTRALORGAN DER SOZIALISTISCHEN EINHEITSPARTEI DEUTSCHLANDS

1. Jahrgang 1946 Berlin, Sonntag, 22. April 1946

Das größte Ereignis für unser Volk nach der furchtbaren Tragödie: Die Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands ist geschaffen

## Manifest an das deutsche Volk



Die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung hat sich in der Vergangenheit als Kämpferin für die Befreiung Deutschlands von der Herrschaft der imperialistischen Kriege und für die Erringung der Demokratie erwiesen. Sie hat sich als Kämpferin für die Einheit Deutschlands erwiesen. Sie hat sich als Kämpferin für die Befreiung Deutschlands von der Herrschaft der imperialistischen Kriege und für die Erringung der Demokratie erwiesen. Sie hat sich als Kämpferin für die Einheit Deutschlands erwiesen.

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Manifesto addressed to the German people by the Unification Congress of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany

on record its commitment to proletarian internationalism.

Thus, in its first party programme, the SED was guided by the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism which had found practical confirmation in the Soviet Union and which were being successfully applied in the people's democracies. As Erich Honecker has noted; "It was precisely the fact that unification took place on the basis



of such a programme which ensured the systematic further development of the SED as a militant revolutionary party of the proletariat inspired at every stage of its development by the teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin."<sup>9</sup>

The founding of the SED was the result of decades of struggle by the German labour movement, and above all by the Communists, to restore class unity on a revolutionary basis. The liberation by the Soviet Union made it possible to bring this struggle to a successful conclusion. The founding of the SED marked a historic victory for Marxism-Leninism, the most important accomplishment in the history of the German labour movement since the proclamation of the Communist *Manifesto* by Marx and Engels and the founding of the KPD. As history has shown, the united revolutionary party of the working class provided the decisive safeguard against the restoration of imperialist conditions and the precondition for all future victories of the working people.

The SED was carrying on the revolutionary traditions of the KPD and its Marxist-Leninist policies. The militant traditions of the KPD, combined with the experience of the SPD members, made the united party a still stronger force, a party of the working class and all working men and women, with a membership exceeding one million.

Countless Communists and Social Democrats deserve great credit for their part in creating the SED. Many of them are no longer with us, but their contributions will forever remain unforgotten. Suffice it to single out for mention here the following pioneers of revolutionary working-class unity: Anton Ackermann, Martha Arendsee, Edith Baumann, Werner Bruschke, Otto Buchwitz, Kurt Bürger, Franz Dahlem, Friedrich Ebert, Werner Eggerath, Max Fechner, Kurt Fischer, Rudolf Friedrichs, August Frölich, Ottomar Geschke, Bernhard Göring, Otto Grotewohl, Richard Gyptner, Wilhelm Höcker, Edwin Hoernle, Heinrich Hoffmann, Erich Hoenecker, Hans Jendretzky, August Karsten, Käthe Kern, Ber-

nard Koenen, Wilhelm Koenen, Helmut Lehmann, Bruno Leuschner, Karl Litke, Karl Maron, Hermann Matern, Otto Meier, Carl Moltmann, Erich Mückenberger, Fred Oelssner, Josef Orlopp, Wilhelm Pieck, Heinrich Rau, Willy Sägebrecht, Hermann Schlimme, Elli Schmidt, Robert Siewert, Gustav Sobottka, Karl Steinhoff, Walter Ulbricht, Paul Verner, Paul Wandel, Herbert Warnke, and Otto Winzer.

Working-class unity was the dominant theme of May Day in 1946. Describing the May Day rally in Berlin, the co-founder of the FDGB, Roman Chwalek reported: "Masses of people thronged the city centre. Hundreds of thousands packed the streets leading to Berlin's Lustgarten. The square could barely hold the huge, enthusiastic crowd. The mood of joy and exuberance was indescribable. For many old friends and comrades who had spent many years working in clandestinity or had languished in prison or concentration camp it was a happy reunion. They embraced each other, joining the seemingly endless procession of Berlin's working people. Leading the way were the leaders of the united working-class party, our Socialist Unity Party."<sup>10</sup>

In the western zones of occupation the urge for unity of the labour movement was no less powerful than in the Soviet-occupied part of Germany. With hindsight, even some bourgeois and right-wing social democratic historians find themselves compelled to concede this point. Yet despite strenuous efforts by Communists and class-conscious Social Democrats, success eluded them. By combining administrative coercion with anticommunist propaganda and political demagoguery, the ruling alliance consisting of the imperialist occupation powers, the German monopolist bourgeoisie and right-wing opportunist leaders, managed to nip any move towards unity of action in the bud and to deepen the split in the working-class movement once again. This had grave consequences, with implications going far beyond the labour movement. It augured ill for the struggle to end the rule of imperialism in the western zones of occupation and to

establish a unitary and democratic German state. As further developments were to show, the prevention of the unity of the labour movement in the western zones marked the first decisive step towards the restoration of the rule of imperialism in this area and towards the division of Germany.

#### 8. The fall from power of the imperialist bourgeoisie and the emergence of a nationally owned sector of the economy

The imperialist bourgeoisie, with the owners of large industrial and banking concerns as its nucleus, was the ruling class in the Kaiser's Empire, in the Weimar Republic and in Nazi Germany. It bore most of the blame for Nazism and war. Therefore the demand was being raised throughout Germany and in many other countries that it be stripped of its power in accordance with the resolutions of Potsdam. At the outset, not even the western powers and the bourgeois parties in the western zones dared to come out openly in favour of monopoly rule. The Ahlen Programme of the CDU, published in the British-occupied zone in February 1947, advocated an "economic system based on communal ownership" because, it pointed out, "capitalist economic system has not lived up to the vital political and social interests of the German people."<sup>11</sup> Later on, bourgeois politicians admitted that such radical pronouncements were merely designed to prevent radical measures.

Although the demand to oust the monopolists and banking magnates from power was raised in all occupation zones, it was satisfied only in the Soviet-occupied zone. All the conditions were present there owing to the establishment of working-class unity and the consistently antifascist policy of the USSR. In the autumn of 1945 the SMAD confiscated the property of the Nazi state and that of war criminals, appointed trustees to administer it ad interim and ordered banks to be closed. Supported

## Sichert den Frieden!

Aufruf der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei, der Liberal-Demokratischen Partei, der Christlich-Demokratischen Union und des Freien Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes des Landes Sachsen zum

### Volksentscheid

über die Übergabe von Betrieben von Kriegs- und Naziverbrechern in das Eigentum des Volkes

Nach den furchtbaren Leiden, die der Hitlerkrieg über das deutsche Volk gebracht hat, ist es eine Lebensnotwendigkeit für Deutschland: die von den Kriegs- und Naziverbrechern die materiellen Machtmittel genommen werden. Um die friedliche Arbeit des Volkes und den demokratischen Aufbau nunmehr zu sichern; um die Enteignung der Betriebe der Kriegs- und Naziverbrecher zur nationalen Notwendigkeit geworden.

Die sowjetische Besatzungsbehörde hat die von ihr in großer Zahl beschlagnahmten und enteigneten Betriebe von Kriegsverbrechern sowie aktiven Verfechtern der faschistischen Kriegspolitik

#### dem Volke zur Verfügung

gestellt. Die Besatzungsbehörden haben damit den demokratischen Selbstverwaltungsorganen die Möglichkeit gegeben, zu entscheiden, was mit diesen Betrieben geschehen soll. Wir würdigen diese Handlung als einen Akt besonderer Hochherzigkeit. Nunmehr ist es Aufgabe des Volkes selbst, dafür zu sorgen, daß diese Betriebe in den Dienst der Befriedigung der Lebensbedürfnisse des Volkes gestellt werden. Die in der Einheitsfront zusammengeschlossenen drei antifaschistischen Parteien und die Gewerkschaften haben die Durchführung des Volksentscheides bei der Landesverwaltung beantragt. Durch den Volksentscheid soll zum Ausdruck gebracht werden, daß diese Betriebe für immer dem friedlichen Aufbau dienen sollen. Sie sollen niemals mehr für die furchtbaren Zwecke der Kriegsverbrecher ausgenutzt werden.

Wir haben die Landesverwaltung ersucht, den Termin für den Volksentscheid festzusetzen auf den

## 30. Juni 1946

Poster for the referendum in Saxony on the nationalization of businesses owned by Nazi and war criminals, 1946

by the unity of action of the KPD and SPD, the working people made use of their right to participation in economic affairs, purging factories and offices of war criminals and Nazi activists. Decisions of great import had thus been taken against the imperialist German bourgeoisie. The decisive blow against it was delivered after the founding of the SED.

During a referendum held on 30 June 1946 in Saxony, where two fifths of the Soviet-occupied zone's industrial potential was concentrated, 77.62 per cent of the electorate voted for the expropriation without compensation of enterprises owned by former Nazi activists and war criminals. The referendum, a form of popular verdict still known to many from the days of the Weimar Republic, had been requested on the initiative of the SED by the Democratic Bloc parties and the FDGB in Saxony, and the provincial administration had responded favourably. People from all walks of life pronounced themselves in favour of expropriating the war criminals without compensation. Church representatives, too, supported this demand. The referendum served as a basis for legislation enacted in Saxony and in other *Länder* of the Soviet zone of occupation. The implementation of the laws was in the hands of sequestration commissions composed of members of all Democratic Bloc parties and the FDGB. They had to decide which enterprises should be expropriated. This involved fierce arguments with reactionary forces in the CDU and LDPD which held a protecting hand over many an incriminated Nazi or disputed the definitive nature of the measures that had been initiated.

By the spring of 1948 a total of 9,281 business concerns belonging to former Nazi activists and war criminals had been confiscated without compensation, including 3,843 industrial enterprises. At the time they accounted for about 40 per cent of total industrial output. Among the major concerns expropriated were enterprises belonging to the AEG and Siemens electrical companies, to the Flick group, to IG Farben and other monopolies. The premises became the property of the *Land* in question.

The economic foundations for the power of imperialism, militarism and fascism were thus destroyed in the Soviet zone of occupation where the imperialist bourgeoisie ceased to exist as a class. There emerged a powerful nationally owned sector of industry which provided the economic backbone of the antifascist-democratic system. In this sector, based on public ownership, the exploitation of man by man had been abolished. Production relations of a radically new type, inspired by mutual aid and comradely cooperation, began to develop.

In the western zones, too, the Communists were pressing hard for the ouster of the monopolists and banking magnates. This demand was strongly backed by trade union organizations. At a referendum held in Hesse in December 1946 72 per cent of the electorate voted in favour of transferring the key industries into communal ownership. Some *Landtage*, or provincial assemblies, in the western zones enacted legislation providing for the expropriation of monopolistic enterprises. However the occupation authorities forbade the practical implementation of all decisions directed against the economic power of the imperialist German bourgeoisie.

In accordance with the provisions of the Potsdam Agreement regarding reparations the machinery and equipment of some 600 former arms factories in the Soviet zone of occupation was dismantled for use in reconstruction work in the Soviet Union and in Poland. Another 200 arms factories originally scheduled for dismantling were converted into Soviet State Concerns (SAG) in 1946, which meant that many German workers retained their jobs. A mounting proportion of the output of these factories was used for the benefit of economic reconstruction in the Soviet-occupied zone. Thanks to the activities of experienced Soviet specialists the SAG, which in 1948 accounted for 22 per cent of gross industrial output, developed into schools of socialist economic management and proletarian internationalism. The Soviet State Concerns, all of which had been handed over to

German workers by 1954, were of great significance for the development of the GDR's socialist economy.

After the emergence of a nationally-owned sector, the consolidation of nationally-owned enterprises (VEB) assumed the highest priority. Reactionaries of every hue predicted economic chaos because the workers were allegedly incapable of managing the economy. But despite lack of experience and training, despite the open or covert resistance offered by the expropriated monopolists and their henchmen, despite the many pressing problems of the post-war period, the working class—freed from exploitation and oppression—demonstrated what it was capable of accomplishing. While in 1946 gross industrial output had been a mere 43 per cent of the 1936 level, the figure rose to 54.4 per cent by 1947 and to 68 per cent by 1948. Labour productivity, however, rose very slowly because the equipment was obsolete and material conditions were difficult. By 1948 it had reached about 50 per cent of the pre-war level.

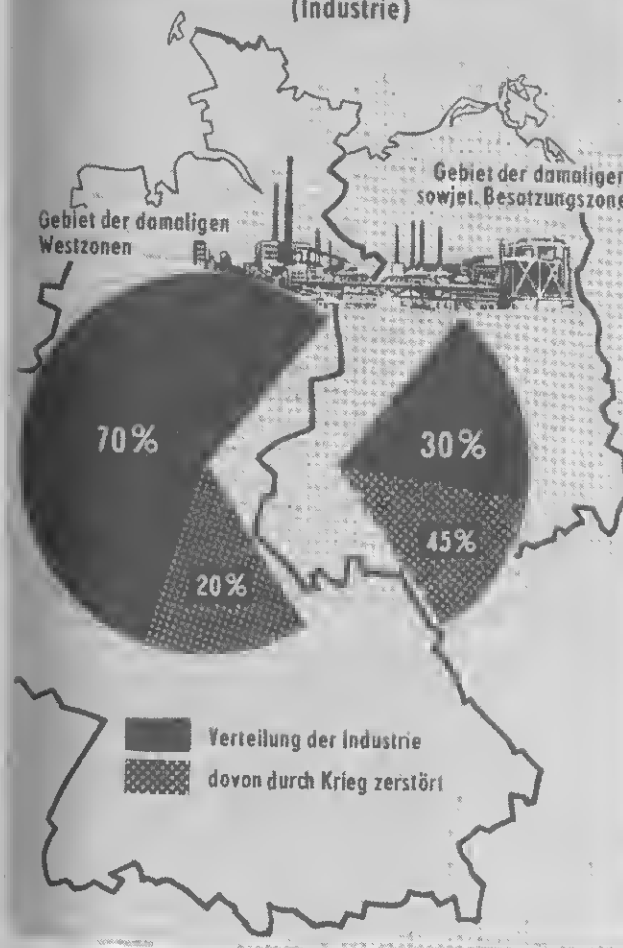
9. "Produce more, distribute more equitably,  
live better!"

In the autumn of 1946 democratic elections were held in the Soviet zone of occupation, the first such elections in German history. The SED, the leading force of the anti-

The economic starting position in 1945 (industry)

	Western zones (now FRG)	Soviet zone (now GDR)
Share of industry	70 per cent	30 per cent
Damaged by war	20 per cent	45 per cent

Ökonomische Startbedingungen 1945  
(Industrie)



fascist-democratic reformation emerged from them as the strongest party. At local elections 57.1 per cent of the electorate voted for the SED, and at the elections to the district and provincial assemblies the respective figures were 50.3 and 47.5 per cent.

The provincial governments formed after the elections were an embodiment of the alliance of the Democratic Bloc parties led by the SED. Twenty-one of the ministers of the provincial governments were members of the SED, while nine belonged to the LDPD, eight to the CDU and one had no party affiliation. In late 1946 and early 1947 the provincial assemblies (*Landtage*) adopted democratic constitutions in which the most important results of the antifascist-democratic reformation were enshrined.

In 1947 the SED and the new organs of state faced a hard test. Highly unfavourable weather conditions compounded the difficulties of the post-war years. An indescribably harsh winter was followed by a long, hot summer which brought a severe drought. Production was stagnant in many factories, and it was often impossible to supply the population with even the barest necessities. Working morale and discipline were at a low ebb among many working people.

Franz Becker, then mayor of Storkow, wrote about this trying time: "People everywhere felt the pangs of hunger. The townspeople went to the countryside to 'organize' food ... They offered durable goods, and the farmers demanded and accepted bed linen, carpets, watches, silverware, clothing materials, bicycles and shoes. As a result, dozens of tons of potatoes were rolling each day by rail ... into the kitchens of the starving townspeople. What the farmers kept was already inadequate if an enlarged acreage was to be planted with crops ... It was a disaster in the making."<sup>12</sup>

Under the slogan "Produce more, distribute more equitably, live better!" the 2nd SED Congress in September 1947 called on the working class and all other working

people to redouble their efforts in consolidating their revolutionary gains, fighting against hunger and cold and improving their living conditions. With a view to increasing output, the workers in some nationally owned enterprises and Soviet State Concerns organized the first competitions. Members of the FDJ formed shock brigades. Workers came up with proposals as to how raise output and conserve energy and materials. They began to organize workers' control to safeguard food supplies and fuel distribution. The authorities, especially the police, cracked down on black marketeers and speculators who profited from the plight of the masses.

After joint consultations with leading politicians of the SED and the FDGB, the SMAD, in October 1947, issued Order No. 234 which provided for important measures designed to raise productivity and to improve the working and living conditions of the working people. The order provided an incentive for workers to produce more. It helped to make it plain that those making the greatest contribution to society could lay the greatest claim to material and moral recognition. The implementation of the order created conditions for progressively improving the situation of the working people.

After a beginning had been made in 1947 to establish an all-embracing social security system and the holiday service of the FDGB had begun its activities in May, Order No. 234 constituted the prelude to many further social measures. Nationally owned firms began to set up their own health centres and outpatient clinics, works canteens and dining halls, club-rooms and libraries, as well as kindergartens and crèches. Despite the difficult material conditions it was possible, even at this early stage, to expand working people's social rights to an extent unprecedented in German history.

The Soviet State Concerns provided exemplary social services for their employees. The chronicle of the Siemens-Planina-Werke (now VEB Elektrokohle Berlin-Lichtenberg) notes the following developments:

\* Wartime slang for "obtain by irregular means"

Autumn 1946	A works canteen is established. All workers and salaried employees receive a hot meal per day without having to use their ration card.
February 1947	A cobbler's workshop is set up.
8 March 1947	The first dining hall is opened.
March 1947	A tailor's workshop is established.
Spring 1947	A retail store is opened.
June 1947	A 30-place holiday home at Buckow is rented.
September 1947	The firm launches a scheme to help employees to convert damaged buildings into habitable places.
October 1947	New regulations concerning pay, working hours and holiday leave take effect under Order No. 234.
December 1947	A works doctor begins his activities.

A particularly difficult task facing the new organs of state was to provide a new home for millions of German resettlers who had entered the Soviet-occupied zone, mostly from Poland and Czechoslovakia, under the terms of the Potsdam Agreement. On the initiative of the Central Administration for German Resettlers, headed by the Communist Rudi Engel, 623 resettlement camps for approximately half a million people had been set up by the end of 1945. Vehicles, furniture, clothing, food and medical supplies were procured with support from the SMAD and through donations from the general public. By January 1947 11.6 million resettlers had arrived in the four zones of occupation, 4.3 million of them in the Soviet-occupied zone. Proportionally, this was the largest influx. At the time in question resettlers made up one fourth of the population. The largest proportion was recorded in Mecklenburg: over 43 per cent. More than one third of the land confiscated during the democratic agrarian reform went to resettlers.

By June 1948 the resettlement process had been largely

concluded in the area under Soviet occupation. While the resettlers were offered a new home there, things were different in the western zones where a deliberate effort was made to sabotage and delay their integration as fully fledged citizens. *Landsmannschaften* (irredentist organizations) came into existence, most of them dominated by former Nazis, which fomented feelings of revanchism and nationalism among the resettlers. In that way the reactionaries sought to win popular support for a new "eastern crusade".

#### 10. The situation in 1948

By mid-1948 crucial tasks of the antifascist-democratic reformation had been accomplished in the Soviet zone of occupation. The key provisions of the Potsdam Agreement relating to de-Nazification and demilitarization had been carried out and the monopolists, banking magnates and Junkers stripped of their economic and political power. New property and class relationships had come into existence, with the working class having become the leading force in society. It had a dominant influence in the revolutionary-democratic organs of state. As of 1948 some 520,000 former Nazis had been removed from office and replaced by antifascists, most of them former workers. More than half of the general managers of nationally-owned enterprises were workers. By its nature and its principal results, the antifascist democratic reformation corresponded to the revolutionary processes taking place in the people's democracies. Just as in the latter, it ushered in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism.

However, by 1948 the process of revolutionary change in the Soviet zone of occupation had not yet attained the same stage as in most of the European people's democracies. There was still a powerful capitalist sector in industry and agriculture, including virtually the entire wholesale trade. Besides, small commodity producers were still

forming an extensive sector, which consisted of numerous private farms, craft establishments and private retail stores.

The capitalist forces, as well as large segments of the middle strata, had strong reservations about the party of the working class and socialism, often to the point of overt hostility. Anticommunist, anti-Soviet and nationalistic views were widespread. Reactionary forces were still wielding considerable economic and political influence. There was still a danger that domestic reactionaries and foreign counter-revolutionaries might unite on a platform of anticommunism and bourgeois nationalism and launch an all-out attack on the achievements of the working people.

A substantial part of the population was under the influence of imperialist propaganda. Many working people lacked confidence in the SED's strategy of democratic reconstruction through the people's own efforts. In the working class, too, opportunistic and other bourgeois and petty-bourgeois views were lingering on. Overcoming these was not made any easier by the fact that as a result of de-Nazification substantial numbers of former Nazi party members—including one-time civil servants, teachers and others—had taken up production jobs. Many of them did not abandon their reactionary views and remained enemies of the working class and of socialism.

Compared with the European people's democracies, the situation was marked by one striking peculiarity, namely that while the antifascist-democratic reformation was on the agenda in the whole of Germany, it was only possible to carry it out successfully in the area under Soviet occupation. What had become increasingly discernible in the western zones by 1947-48 was the contours of a separate state in which the imperialist German bourgeoisie, with support from the western occupying powers, was restoring its rule. Within years of war's end the line of demarcation along the Elbe and Werra rivers had come to separate two territories distinctly different in terms of social development.

The imperialist policy of restorationism and partition was an element of the cold war policy which under pressure from the USA had totally prevailed in the imperialist camp in 1947-48. The object of this policy was to halt the world revolutionary process, to consolidate the rule of the bourgeoisie which had been weakened in some countries, and to work towards the restoration of capitalist conditions in the people's democracies.

Threats to use the atom bomb, the establishment of imperialist military pacts and numerous military bases, economic reprisals and unbridled anticommunist propaganda—those were the weapons used in the cold war. For years on end this policy meant acute international tension, uneasiness and uncertainty, an escalating arms race, and terror and persecution for countless opponents of the cold war. More than once mankind found itself facing the danger of an atomic world war.

In their attempt to stem the revolutionary tide in Europe, the major imperialist powers concentrated on Germany. Their aim was to integrate the western zones in the imperialist system of alliances and to make use of their potential in the struggle against socialism. In order to prevent the fulfilment of the resolutions of Potsdam and rule out an antifascist-democratic development in the western zones, they set course on the division of Germany. The main function of a separate imperialist state comprising the western zones was to help eliminate the antifascist-democratic conditions prevailing in the Soviet zone of occupation.

Consequently, the policy of the cold war was from the outset accompanied by numerous aggressive measures directed against the revolutionary gains of the working people in the Soviet-occupied zone. As part of an economic blockade imposed upon the socialist countries, trade between the western zones and the Soviet zone was cut off on the instructions of the western occupying powers in March 1948, as were rail transport and transit traffic. These and other actions were designed to paralyse the economy in the Soviet zone of occupation.

## 11. Continuation of the revolutionary process

From the changed situation the SED drew the conclusion that the achievements of the antifascist-democratic reformation would have to be consolidated and further expanded in every possible way. It adopted decisions of fundamental importance concerning the 1949-50 Two-Year-Plan, the consolidation of the new organs of state and the accelerated development of the SED on the basis of Marxism-Leninism. Increased efforts were needed in order to frustrate the imperialist policy of partition.

In further developing its policy, the SED took into account that the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism were closely intertwined. As Erich Honecker noted in retrospect, it acted on the premise "that the antifascist-democratic reformation develops into socialist revolution to the extent that the working class makes its supremacy felt under the leadership of its revolutionary vanguard, that it conquers the decisive positions of power and, in so doing, forges and extends its alliance with the other classes and strata of the working population."<sup>13</sup>

The continuation of the revolutionary process—in direct confrontation with the major imperialist powers and under the conditions of the cold war—raised many difficult problems. During that phase of transition from capitalism to socialism, in which the old and the new existed side by side, the social contradictions inherent in a transitional period became glaringly apparent, and the class struggle mounted in intensity. The choice was clear: either to continue unswervingly along the path of revolutionary change towards socialism or to abandon the gains of revolution and revert to capitalism.

That situation, involving a decision of historic significance, made new, greater demands on the working class and its revolutionary party. The prime need was to raise the fighting strength of the SED and to strengthen its unity and cohesion still further. Therefore, party members increased their efforts to assimilate Marxism-Leninism and the experience of the CPSU and to apply them in

practice. Above all in the nationally owned enterprises, organs of state and trade unions the SED laboured ceaselessly to realize the leading role of the working class on an ever broader scale.

The 1949-50 Two-Year-Plan was also geared to this aim. It provided for the accelerated development of the nationally owned sector in the economy, especially in industry. The object was to give it a clear position of pre-eminence in the national economy by concentrating the modest investment funds available on mechanical engineering, basic industry, iron and steel, and energy production. That was the way to improve the situation of the working people and to bring out the leading role of the working class more clearly. Furthermore, the plan formulated challenging tasks for the small commodity producers, notably the peasant farmers, and it also opened up prospects for entrepreneurs and big farmers who were acting up to their obligations.

The Two-Year-Plan marked the beginning of central economic planning for a prolonged period in the Soviet zone of occupation. Consequently, the German Economic Commission (DWK), set up in 1947 as an advisory body of the SMAD, was endowed in 1948 with far-reaching powers for the management and planning of the national economy. The DWK was enlarged, and the tried and tested working-class leader Heinrich Rau appointed as its chairman. Now largely composed of elected representatives of the Landtage and of the parties and mass organizations, the DWK played a prominent part in preparing and setting in motion the two-year plan.

Associations of nationally owned enterprises (VVB) were formed to facilitate the management of the economy. At the same time, however, the development of the nationally owned sector in competition with the capitalist sector made it necessary to expand the system of popular control. Committees for the protection of public property were formed under the auspices of the DWK. In July 1948 the Central Control Commission attached to the DWK began to operate. The creation of a



united and centralized police administration, the establishment of armed stand-by units of the People's Police and increased efforts to secure the borders with the western zones of occupation represented fundamental measures aimed at protecting the gains of the revolution. All this was evidence of a reinforcement of the power positions and the leading role of the working class.

In its drive to carry on the process of revolutionary change, the SED stepped up its efforts to disseminate Marxism-Leninism. The Dietz Verlag, the publishing organization of the SED, brought out numerous works by Marx, Engels and Lenin. A growing number of cadres attended the Karl Marx Party College which had been founded in 1946 and attached to the SED Executive. The year 1949 saw the establishment—again under the auspices of the Party Executive—of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute (later renamed Institute of Marxism-Leninism). Resolutions adopted by the SED in tribute to the 1848 revolution and the November 1918 revolution imparted fundamental lessons of history. Lecturers and tutors from the USSR were making an important contribution to spreading the scientific world outlook of the working class.

Socialist cultural figures such as the writers Kurt Barthel (Kuba), Johannes R. Becher, Willi Bredel, Eduard Claudius, Otto Gotsche, Jan Petersen, and Anna Seghers, the artists Hans and Lea Grundig, Max Lingner, Otto Nagel and others were fighting against German imperialism with the means at their command and, in their best works, portrayed the working class as champion of a new order dedicated to human values. Bertolt Brecht, using the example of the Paris Commune, demonstrated the historical necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The works of bourgeois-humanist German authors such as Lion Feuchtwanger, Bernhard Kellermann, Heinrich Mann, Thomas Mann and Arnold Zweig, who were chiefly concerned with the development of the German bourgeoisie, gained wide currency. Hans Fallada's 1947 novel *Jeder stirbt für sich allein* showed the

democratic potential inherent in the non-proletariat classes and strata.

The continuation of the revolutionary process sharpened the ongoing process of differentiation within the CDU and LDPD. While pro-imperialist politicians lost further ground in what were often acrimonious disputes inside these parties, the progressive forces around Otto Nuschke and Reinhold Lobedanz were able to augment their influence in the CDU, and the same went for those around Johannes Dieckmann and Hans Loch in the LDPD. Increasing numbers of CDU and LDPD members began to realize that only alongside, and under the leadership of the working class could social progress be safeguarded for the benefit of the whole people. The Democratic Farmers' Party of Germany (DBD), with Ernst Goldenbaum as its chairman, and the National Democratic Party of Germany (NDPD), with Lothar Bolz as its chairman, also contributed to the further consolidation of the Democratic Bloc. Both parties were formed in 1948 as petty bourgeois-democratic parties recognizing the leading role of the working class. The FDGB and the FDJ were also admitted to the Bloc at that time.

In the complicated situation that prevailed in 1948 the Bloc policy passed its most severe test to date. The alliance of the democratic parties under the leadership of the SED became closer as did their cooperation in preparing and implementing the economic plans and in consolidating the new organs of state.

On 13 October 1948 the miner Adolf Hennecke performed a special shift in which he topped his daily quota by 287 per cent. In order to achieve such a result he had studied the experience of the Stakhanov movement in the Soviet Union. Hennecke's accomplishment went a long way towards rapidly popularizing the movement for greater efficiency at work. Those who followed his example—among the first to do so were the lignite workers Fritz and Gerhard Bönisch, the furnace builder Hans Garbe, the railwayman Paul Heine, the builder's foreman Paul Sack, the foreman weaver Franz Striemann and the

coal face workers Paul Berndt, Fritz Himpel and Josef Wujciak, the last named a member of the CDU—were equally aware that a better life presupposed higher levels of output. Only in this way would it be possible to break the vicious circle of hunger-low productivity-hunger.

With strong backing from the SED, the DWK, the FDJ and the FDGB, Hennecke and his followers were able to prevail over attitudes marked by hostility, lack of understanding and reservations. They demonstrated in practice that it was necessary, precisely under complicated conditions, to act as trail-blazers despite all resistance. Impressive results were achieved not only by older, experienced workers, but also by members of the FDJ, notably young workers, students and members of the People's Police, who were engaged in the construction of the Sosa dam, the first national youth project, and of the water pipeline leading from the Saale river to the Maxhütte foundry at Unterweilenborn. A young tractor driver, Bruno Kiesler, played a pioneering role in boosting agricultural performance.

These and other contributions and the resulting movement for increased efficiency were key factors in the fulfilment of economic plans and in the improvement of working people's living conditions. A new attitude to work began to assert itself.

## **12. The beginnings of new relations with the Soviet Union and the people's democracies**

The rigorous elimination of fascism and imperialism paved the way for creating new relations with the peoples of the Soviet Union and the people's democracies. The relations between communist and workers' parties, based on proletarian internationalism, formed the backbone of these new ties.

The first official contacts were established with the CPSU. In early 1947 a delegation of the SED Executive,

headed by Wilhelm Pieck and Otto Grotewohl, paid a first visit to Moscow. In 1948 further delegation of the SED leadership visited the USSR to discuss with leading officials of the CPSU problems of the international struggle between socialism and imperialism, the struggle for a unitary and democratic German state, the consolidation of antifascist-democratic conditions and the development of the SED on a Marxist-Leninist basis. Cooperation with the fraternal parties in Bulgaria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and other people's democracies began to develop during the same period.

The establishment of political relations with the communist and workers' parties marked a first step towards overcoming the world-wide isolation in which the German people found itself owing to the criminal policies of the Nazi régime. Crucial factors were the consistent ideological work of the SED, the ceaseless struggle against any form of anti-Sovietism and nationalism, and the recognition of the borders fixed in the Potsdam Agreement as well as of the German people's obligation to pay reparations.

One result of the negotiations conducted with the governments and the party leaderships of the people's democracies was the establishment of economic relations. In the latter half of 1948 trade agreements were concluded with most of the European people's democracies. They served to underpin the Two-Year-Plan and helped gradually improve the living conditions of the population. By supplying foodstuffs and raw materials the USSR and the people's democracies assisted the working people in the Soviet-occupied zone in their efforts to counter the effects of the imperialist economic blockade although they were themselves confronted with many pressing problems. In April 1949 the first out of a total of 1,000 tractors from the USSR arrived in the Soviet zone of occupation. They came from the tractor factory in Stalingrad which had been destroyed by Hitler's Wehrmacht and meanwhile been rebuilt. These 1,000 tractors and 540 lorries, also supplied by the Soviet Union, were

to become the basis for the technological re-equipment of the machine hiring stations (MAS).

The Marxist-Leninist parties and the governments of the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the other people's democracies supported the struggle of the German people for a peace-loving German state and against the imperialist policy of partition. In their respective countries they strove to break down step by step the mistrust towards the German people that had resulted from bitter experiences at the hands of German imperialism and its predatory policies.

The relations between the SED and other communist and workers' parties were a major factor in the evolving cooperation between the trade unions, the youth federations and other mass organizations. In 1948 the FDJ was admitted to the World Federation of Democratic Youth and one year later the FDGB joined the World Federation of Trade Unions.

### 13. The partitioning of Germany by imperialism

At conferences of the foreign ministers of the USSR, the USA, the UK and France held in Moscow and London in 1947, the representatives of the Western powers rejected the Soviet proposal to establish forthwith a democratic German government and to sign a peace treaty with it. Later that year the USA proclaimed its European Recovery Programme which was to become known as the Marshall Plan, named after the then US Secretary of State. Goods supplies and credits from the USA, with political and economic conditions attached to them, were geared to the policy of the cold war, the aim being to help stabilize the weakened capitalist system in Europe and push back socialism. The participation of the Western zones in the Marshall Plan—a move vigorously supported by the bourgeois and social democratic party leaders in the Western zones—went a long way towards restoring



Poster for the popular initiative in support of German unity and a just peace, 1948

the economic and political power of German imperialism in that part of the country. It was evidence that the USA and its allies had set course on the partitioning of Germany.

The SED, the other parties and the mass organizations of the Democratic Bloc, acting alongside the USSR and the people's democracies, spared no effort to counter this threat. The SED supported the uphill struggle being waged by the Communists and other democrats in the Western zones. In late 1947 the SED initiated the Movement of the German People's Congress for Unity and a Just Peace, which brought together people from all walks of life and had a large following even in the Western zones.

The German People's Council, the supreme body of the People's Congress movement, invited the politicians in the Western zones to help bring about an understanding on the unity of Germany. In May-June 1948, in a popular initiative organized by the People's Congress movement, 14.7 million voters called for a referendum on the unity of Germany. Among those taking part were 1.5 million inhabitants of the Western zones—despite a ban imposed by the imperialist occupying powers. Although according to the Constitution of the Weimar Republic the conditions for a referendum had been met, the military authorities of the Western powers ignored a corresponding application by the German People's Council.

Under the leadership of the SED, the People's Congress movement in the Soviet zone of occupation became a powerful democratic mass movement. Having emerged in the struggle against imperialism and its policy of partition, it made a growing contribution to the consolidation of antifascist-democratic conditions. Cooperation between the working class and other democratic forces began to evolve in the German People's Council and its various bodies and in the numerous people's committees that had been formed. This enabled the working people to be drawn into state activities to a larger extent than before and promoted the process of clarification in the Democratic Bloc parties allied with the SED.



Red Army soldiers hoisting the flag of victory atop the Reichstag building, 30 April 1945



Dresden, May 1945



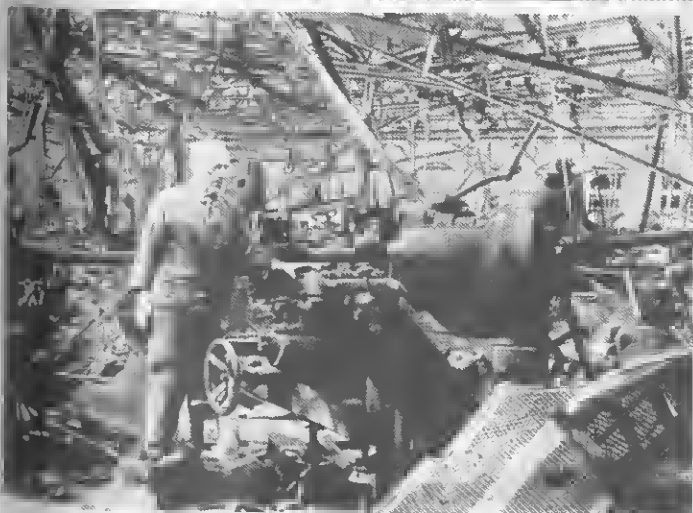
Survivors in the ruins of Berlin



Women helping in reconstruction work in the autumn of 1945



The Alexandrov Ensemble in Berlin  
Soviet aid for the German population



An office of the KPD  
A Bergmann-Borsig plant in late 1945



Inauguration of the City Council of Greater Berlin on 19 May 1945  
 Seen from left to right are Col.-Gen. Nikolai Berzarin, Hars  
 Jendretzky, Dr Arthur Werner and Karl Maron.  
 A parade of antifascist police in Leipzig, September 1945



Theo Wiechert, Erich Honecker and Paul Verner (from l. to r.)  
 signing the charter of the FDJ  
 Shop floor trade union elections, February 1946



The leaders of the USSR, the USA and the UK, J. V. Stalin, Harry S. Truman and Clement R. Attlee, at the Potsdam Conference.



Paul Wegener and Eduard von Winterstein in a performance of Lessing's „Nathan der Weise“ at Berlin's Deutsches Theater, September 1945



Marchers supporting the land reform  
A newly recruited teacher before her class, October 1946







Unification of the KPD and the SPD. The Congress delegates vote unanimously for the foundation of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, 21 April 1946.

Wilhelm Pieck and Otto Grotewohl clasp hands in an historic gesture



Nationally owned enterprises formed by expropriating Nazi and war criminals.



Young workers prominent in the efficiency campaign at a congress in Erfurt, April 1949



Youngsters helping with the building of farmsteads and sheds



Adolf Hennecke

A youth team celebrating the completion ahead of schedule of the water pipeline for the Maxhütte foundry at Unterwellenborn



The SED Executive discussing the two-year plan for the restoration and development of a peacetime economy in June 1948. Seen from l. to r. are Walter Ulbricht, Wilhelm Pieck and Otto Grotewohl.

Second congress of the Society for the Study of the Culture of the Soviet Union, July 1947



The platform committee at the first German People's Congress, Berlin, December 1947. In the first row (from l. to r.): Wilhelm Schirmer-Pröscher, Wilhelm Pieck, Dr Wilhelm Külz and Otto Nuschke

Despite strenuous efforts, the aim of creating a unitary and democratic German state on the basis of the Potsdam Agreement was not attained. In their so-called London recommendations of June 1948 the Western powers announced the formation of a separate West German state. Later that month a unilateral currency reform was carried out in the Western zones in violation of the Potsdam Agreement. This move led to the country being split into two currency areas and the monopolies raking in huge profits in the Western zones. The restoration of the economic and political power of the imperialist German bourgeoisie proceeded apace.

By introducing a separate currency in Berlin's Western sectors the Western powers triggered the Berlin crisis, raising the spectre of a military conflict between the big powers. One purpose of the events in Berlin was to divert public attention from the measures that were being taken to set up a West German state. Anticommunist politicians declared West Berlin to be a "front-line city" in the battle against socialism. With the division of the city a *fait accompli*, a new, democratic City Council with Friedrich Ebert as mayor was formed on 30 November 1948 in the Soviet sector of Berlin.

In September 1948 a Parliamentary Council drawn from delegates of the Land parliaments had been set up in Bonn. In May 1949 it adopted a "Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany", a document that had been worked out without the involvement of the population. While this constitution provided for some democratic rights which the working people had managed to assert for themselves, it enabled imperialism to be fully restored within a bourgeois-parliamentary framework. When in September 1949 the Bundestag met in Bonn and a government led by Konrad Adenauer and including representatives of the CDU, CSU, FDP and the German Party was formed, the partition of Germany was consummated.

The FRG was a result of the policy of restorationism and division pursued by the Western powers, the imperialist German bourgeoisie and right-wing leaders of the SPD.

As a final act of national betrayal the German bourgeoisie split Germany in two, fearful of an open political confrontation with the united working class and other progressive forces in a single democratic German state. Its policies were motivated by an endeavour to save and restore its position as the ruling class and to assert its aims which were inimical to the interests of the people.

With the FRG there emerged a state that was again ruled by those class forces which had twice plunged the German people into the disaster of a world war. From the outset, the government of the Federal Republic raised territorial claims. Its declared aim was to restore an imperialist German state, at least within its frontiers as of 1937. Even at that early stage it was secretly pursuing the integration of the FRG into NATO. This military bloc had been created in April 1949 in a move to align the forces of imperialism against socialism and all democratic movements. As Adenauer later conceded in his memoirs, "provision had been made for admitting a future German federal republic"<sup>14</sup> when NATO was established.

Determined counter-measures were required to safeguard peace and the revolutionary gains of the working people in the Soviet-occupied zone. In late September and early October 1949 numerous working people urged that a democratic government be formed in Berlin. The SED deliberated with the CPSU on what measures to take and entered into negotiations with the other parties of the Democratic Bloc. In 5 October 1949 a joint session of the Presidium of the German People's Council and the Bloc of antifascist-democratic parties decided to convene the German People's Council for a meeting on 7 October 1949.

## II.

### Establishment of the foundations of socialism

1949—1961

# 1. The founding of the German Democratic Republic

In the banquet hall of what is today the Haus der Ministerien in Berlin's Leipziger Strasse, the German People's Council met on 7 October 1949 for its 9th session with Wilhelm Pieck in the chair. The People's Council had been elected in May 1949 by the third German People's Congress whose delegates had received their mandates from two-thirds of the electorate in the Soviet zone of occupation in free and democratic elections. For the People's Congress movement, which had been fighting for a united and democratic Germany, it was a logical historical development that following the creation of the FRG and the ensuing splitting of the country into two entities, it brought forth a workers' and peasants' state.

By a unanimous vote of the 330 delegates present the German People's Council reconstituted itself as the Provisional People's Chamber of the German Democratic Republic and elected Johannes Dieckmann, Vice-Chairman of the LDPD, its president. It enacted the Constitution of the German Democratic Republic which had been the subject of a public debate extending over several months. In accordance with the Constitution Otto Grotewohl, a member of the largest parliamentary group, that of the SED, was charged with forming a provisional government.

The first Constitution of the GDR confirmed the historic achievements of the antifascist-democratic revolution such as the exercise of state power by the working class and its allies, the elimination of monopolies and landed wealth, the creation of a nationally owned sector of the

# GESETZBLATT

der  
Deutschen Demokratischen Republik

1949 Berlin, den 8. Oktober 1949 Nr. 1

## Gesetz

Über die Rekonstitution der Provisorischen Volkskammer der

Deutschen Demokratischen Republik

Vom 7. Oktober 1949

Artikel 1

Die Provisorische Volkskammer der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik konstituiert sich in der Zusammensetzung des vom Dritten Deutschen Volkstages am 30. Mai 1949 gewählten Deutschen Volkstages auf Grund der vom Deutschen Volkstages am 30. März 1949 beschlossenen, vom Dritten Deutschen Volkstages am 30. Mai 1949 bestätigten Verfassung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik.

Artikel 2

Dieses Gesetz tritt mit seiner Annahme in Kraft. Es wird vom Präsidenten der Provisorischen Volkskammer ausgefertigt und verkündet.

Ausgefertigt und verkündet Berlin, den 7. Oktober 1949

Der Präsident der Provisorischen Volkskammer  
der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik

Dieckmann

The law establishing the Provisional People's Chamber of the GDR, 7 October 1949

economy, the right of all citizens to work and education, and the granting of equal rights to women, young people and the Sorbian national minority. At the same time, it ensured the continuance of the revolutionary process begun in 1945 and helped pave the way for the construction of socialism. By its very nature and its key provisions, the Constitution of the GDR resembled the constitutions of the people's democracies in many ways.

On 10 October 1949, the supreme chief of the SMAD, Gen. Vasili Chuikov, one of the legendary heroes of the battles of Stalingrad and Berlin, proceeded to transfer, on instructions from his government, the administrative functions previously exercised by the Soviet military authorities under the Potsdam Agreement to the authorities of the GDR. The SMAD was dissolved and a Soviet Control Commission formed, whose job it was to supervise the implementation of the Potsdam Agreement and other four-power resolutions regarding Germany.

On 11 October the People's Chamber and the Chamber of the Länder (this consisted of members of the GDR's five *Landtage* and existed until 1958) held a joint session at which they elected the tried and tested working-class leader Wilhelm Pieck as President of the GDR. He had been proposed for this office by all parliamentary groups, with Otto Nuschke, Chairman of the CDU, making a formal statement in support.

In his inaugural address the President declared: "We are now at a turning point in German history. Thanks to the indefatigable efforts of the best forces among the German people and thanks to the substantial aid we have received from the Soviet Union, we are now taking the first steps on the road of independent statehood for the German people. Let us all cooperate now in the full awareness of our responsibilities and in a spirit of loyalty and friendship so that we may prove equal to the historic dimensions of the tasks before us and so that we shall not be found wanting in the eyes of posterity."<sup>15</sup>

Wilhelm Pieck's election as the first President of the GDR gave rise to the greatest rally Berlin had seen since

the war. The daily *Tägliche Rundschau* reported: "By afternoon a state of feverish excitement had gripped Berlin. An endless stream of marchers poured into the city centre... Transport in the inner city had to be diverted, and when the rally on August Bebel Platz was about to begin the surrounding streets were packed with huge crowds... There were thunderous outbursts of cheering as the venerable working-class leader stepped up to the flower-bedecked rostrum and waved happily to the hundreds of thousands chanting 'Long live the President of our Democratic Republic!'"<sup>16</sup> At this rally, close to a million Berliners and people from all parts of the republic, including 200,000 members of the FDJ, enthusiastically hailed the founding of the workers' and peasants' state. Erich Honecker, Chairman of the FDJ, assured the worker-president on behalf of progressive youth that they would always remain loyal to this state and devote all their energies to its well-being.

On 12 October the People's Chamber approved the first government of the SED presented by Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl. It consisted of 18 ministers of whom eight belonged to the SED, four to the CDU, three to the LDPD and one each to the NDPD and the DBD. One Minister was not affiliated to any political party.

The first declaration of intent made by Prime Minister Grotewohl was a commitment to peace, social progress and friendship with the Soviet Union, the people's democracies and all peace-loving nations. The establishment of a strong workers' and peasants' state, the Prime Minister pointed out, was necessary in order to press on with the process of social transformation in the GDR and with the struggle for peace and the fight against imperialism and its policy of war and partition. He paid tribute to the alliance of the Democratic Bloc parties and the mass organizations which was now proving its value in the establishment of a workers' and peasants' state. Otto Grotewohl stressed that government policy was in agreement with the internationally binding principles of the Potsdam Agreement. In the name of the government

he pledged adherence to the great traditions of the anti-fascist resistance.

On 13 October, a day that was observed as a special occasion for several years to commemorate the pioneering deed of the miner Adolf Hennecke, members of the government explained the declaration of intent in large nationally owned enterprises. At numerous meetings held in factories and offices, in towns and villages, hundreds of thousands of working people expressed their confidence in the workers' and peasants' government. Millions of people were thus directly involved in the founding of the GDR. The establishment of the workers' and peasants' state was not merely an administrative act, but—unlike the bourgeois German states founded in 1871, 1919 and 1949—the result of a successful popular movement. This made the socialist state something radically new.

With the German Democratic Republic there emerged the first state in the long and chequered history of the German people in which the working class, allied with the peasantry and other working people, exercises power and builds up a socialist system, the first German state developing fully in accordance with the law of social progress. The rise and growth of the GDR fits into the general pattern of the world-wide transition from capitalism to socialism ushered in 1917 by the Great Socialist October Revolution. The factors which made the creation of the socialist German state possible were the Soviet Union's act of liberation and the support received from it, the existence of a world socialist system and the leadership of the people by the working class and its Marxist-Leninist party.

The founding of the GDR was the necessary and, indeed, the only possible answer to the partition of Germany by imperialism.

The German Democratic Republic symbolizes the decisive turning point in the history of the German people. It is the result and the crowning point of centuries of struggle for social progress conducted by the best sons

of the German people. The GDR cherishes the heritage of the German classics and all humanist traditions of the German people. Above all, it is the result of the costly struggle the working class has waged under the leadership of its revolutionary party against capitalist exploitation and imperialist policies of conquest, and for peace, democracy and socialism. It realizes the aims of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and Ernst Thälmann. The GDR upholds the legacy of all great class battles in German history: the early bourgeois revolution at the beginning of the 16th century, the 1848-49 revolution, the November 1918 revolution and the subsequent class struggles of the proletariat, Communist and Social Democratic resistance fighters and antifascists from bourgeois-democratic and Christian circles. The fact that the GDR is firmly rooted in the great historical traditions of the German people is an inexhaustible source of strength for its onward march along the road of progress.

## 2. The first diplomatic moves

The USSR and the other socialist countries, the communist and workers' parties and other democratic forces hailed the foundation of the GDR as a landmark event in the struggle to safeguard peace and in the fight against imperialism. "The formation of the peace-loving German Democratic Republic is a turning point in the history of Europe,"<sup>17</sup> declared the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, J. V. Stalin, in a telegram sent to Wilhelm Pieck and Otto Grotewohl on 13 October 1949.

On 15 October 1949 the government of the USSR decided to exchange diplomatic missions with the GDR. The governments of Bulgaria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, China, Korea, Albania and Vietnam did likewise in the days and weeks that followed, and the Mongolian People's Republic followed suit in April 1950.



The establishment of diplomatic ties with eleven socialist countries gave the GDR a firm international backing. Its links with the Soviet Union and the other states of the world socialist system assumed a visible expression.

In order to forge close and friendly relations with the socialist states it was necessary to resolve fully all those problems which still existed in the GDR's relations with these states, especially its neighbours, as a result of the Second World War.

The most important result of the negotiations with Poland was a joint declaration on the final delimitation of the Oder-Neisse border laid down in the resolutions of Potsdam. Signed on 6 June 1950, it was followed by a treaty to this effect a month later. These agreements created a barrier against the revanchist aspirations of the ruling circles in the FRG. They were a reflection of the major social changes that had taken place in the GDR and in Poland. As Wilhelm Pieck said in a message to Poland's President Boleslaw Bierut, the *de jure* recognition of the Oder-Neisse frontier "marked the definitive end of a dark chapter of history in which the relations between our two peoples were poisoned for centuries. The border of peace along the Oder and Neisse rivers has opened the way to new relations, based on peace and goodneighbourliness, between our two countries."<sup>18</sup>

The joint declaration signed by the GDR and Czechoslovakia on 23 June 1950 noted that there were no controversial or open questions between the two states and that the evacuation of Germans from Czechoslovakia was being regarded as final. Both parties pledged mutual support in the struggle for peace and in economic reconstruction. The GDR government entered into similar agreements with the governments of Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania in June and September 1950. The joint declarations also served as a basis for signing agreements on trade and payments and on scientific and technological collaboration as well as protocols on cultural cooperation.

In September 1950 the GDR was admitted to the Council

for Mutual Economic Assistance which had been formed in early 1949. Cooperation within the CMEA, and notably the aid received from the USSR, went a long way towards consolidating the workers' and peasants' state and helped the GDR to protect its economy from imperialist plots. At the same time, by supplying machinery and equipment the GDR helped with socialist industrialization in the people's democracies.

The establishment of diplomatic relations with the USSR and the other socialist states, the joint declarations signed and membership of the CMEA were initial steps in the process of bringing the GDR into the system of treaties linking the socialist countries.

In June 1950 the USA and its South Korean puppets attacked the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. International tensions increased rapidly, creating the acute threat of a nuclear world war. Like the other socialist states the GDR government vehemently denounced the war policies of US imperialism and expressed solidarity with the liberation struggle of the Korean people. The SED initiated a movement for solidarity with Korea which was to become the largest internationalist campaign ever by the workers and other working people of the GDR.

In marked contrast, the ruling circles in the FRG exploited the aggravation of international tensions in order to foment an anticommunist war hysteria, let loose a wave of repression against all forces committed to peace and embark on remilitarization. In October 1950 the so-called *Amt Blank* was formed in Bonn, which took the first organizational steps toward the establishment of an army with support from the Western powers, primarily the USA. At the same time, a multitude of ex-servicemen's and "tradition-cultivating" associations were springing up. They pressed for rearmament and brought together former Wehrmacht officers for a new army poised for aggression.

In October 1950 the foreign ministers of the USSR and the European people's democracies met in Prague to discuss what joint measures would have to be taken to

counter the dangerous developments in the Federal Republic. This was the first international conference attended by the GDR. The Prague conference of foreign ministers condemned the remilitarization of the FRG and submitted a constructive programme for safeguarding peace in central Europe. It proposed that a peace treaty as provided for in the Potsdam Agreement be concluded with Germany. An all-German constituent council composed of an equal number of representatives of the GDR and the FRG was to prepare the way for the formation of a provisional government which could participate in working out a peace treaty.

In formulating their joint policy for the securing of peace in Europe the socialist states took into account that the constellation of forces in the FRG still offered some opportunities for the anti-imperialist forces there to do away with the social foundations of fascism and a warlike policy and to implement the Potsdam Agreement to the full. An anti-imperialist course of development in the FRG, which could only have been brought about in protracted class struggle, might have paved the way for a unitary and democratic German state. At the same time, the socialist states warned that a remilitarization of the FRG would have grave consequences and that its incorporation into the imperialist pact system would augment the danger of war and widen the gulf between the GDR and the FRG, destroying any chance of democratic reunification.

### 3. The National Front

The National Front owes its origins to the founding of the GDR. At its historic session on 7 October 1949 the People's Chamber adopted a manifest entitled "The National Front of Democratic Germany". It described the struggle for the reunification of Germany on a democratic basis and for the conclusion of a peace treaty as the foremost tasks of the National Front. The February 1950 pro-

gramme of the National Front called for strengthening the GDR and reinforcing friendship with the Soviet Union. Participation in the fulfilment of the national economic plans was singled out as one of the major tasks of the National Front.

In early 1950 the people's committees of the People's Congress movement in the *Länder*, districts, towns and villages of the GDR were reconstituted as committees of the National Front. The number of workers and peasants, intellectuals and others playing an active part in national life within the National Front committees increased considerably. In August 1950 the National Council, the supreme authority of the National Front, elected Erich Correns, a scientist with no party affiliations, to be the chairman of its Presidium.

Under the leadership of the SED the National Front built up its political and organizational strength. Representing the most comprehensive form of the alliance between the working class and other classes and strata, it became an important force in the national life of the GDR. It relied on the Democratic Bloc parties as well as enlisting the cooperation of many citizens who were not politically organized.

In the Federal Republic the National Front failed to evolve into a powerful popular movement despite all the efforts made by Communists and other patriots. Repressive measures by the reactionary state, the splitting of the working class by the right-wing leaders of the SPD and the climate of anticommunism fostered in the country, prevented a union of all those opposed to imperialism.

During the October 1950 elections to the People's Chamber, the Landtage, the district assemblies, the municipal assemblies and rural district councils, the first to be held on the basis of a joint election programme and a joint list of candidates, the National Front passed its first major test. Despite a virulent propaganda campaign launched by the bourgeois parties, right-wing SPD leaders and the imperialist media in the FRG (which speculat-



Poster for the first country-wide elections in 1950: "Let us all join in the reconstruction effort and vote for the list of candidates of the National Front of Democratic Germany!"

ed that the population might still prefer a bourgeois parliamentary system and called for a boycott of the elections), despite hectic activities by imperialist secret services and agents' networks up to the point of death threats and acts of arson, the National Front candidates won an overwhelming victory. With 98.5 per cent of the electorate going to the polls, 99.7 per cent of the voters opted for the candidates of the National Front.

The joint platform of all Democratic Bloc parties under the leadership of the SED was evidence of closer co-operation between them. Some reactionary politicians within the CDU and the LDPD, who were bent on breaking up the bloc of parties and mass organizations and paving the way for the restoration of capitalism, failed to elicit grass-roots support and found themselves compelled to relinquish their posts under pressure from the rank-and-file members. Within the CDU and LDPD the progressive forces willing to contribute to the strengthening of the GDR alongside the working class and its party prevailed definitively. They were led, respectively, by Otto Nuschke, August Bach, and Gerald Götting, and by Johannes Dieckmann, Hans Loch and Manfred Gerlach. The CDU and LDPD were — just like the more recently founded DBD and NDPD—petty bourgeois-democratic parties which recognized the leading role of the working class and were to play an active part in the building of socialism.

The newly elected representative bodies, the formation of a new government of the GDR and new provincial governments, and the measures adopted by the government for the centralized management and planning of the economy, were evidence that the political rule of the working class had consolidated. By and large, the process of establishing a workers' and peasants' state marked by dictatorship of the proletariat had been brought to a close.

#### 4. The 3rd SED Congress

From 20 to 24 July 1950 Berlin was the scene of the 3rd Congress of the SED, the first to be held after the foundation of the GDR.

The report of the Party Executive was presented by Wilhelm Pieck. He was able to point to great successes in the endeavour to consolidate the world socialist system, one factor being the contributions made by the working people of the GDR. The key tasks of the Two-Year-Plan had been accomplished in 18 months. In the spring of 1950 the GDR's industrial output had attained the pre-war level. In agriculture, too, the severe war damage had been largely repaired, with crop production and livestock herds back to their pre-war levels. As of 1950, the 6,000 or so nationally owned enterprises and Soviet State Concerns accounted for half of the gross national product and three quarters of gross industrial production. The crucial socio-economic tasks of giving the nationally owned sector a position of pre-eminence throughout the economy under the Two-Year-Plan had thus been achieved.

Most of the credit for these successes belonged to the working class. Wilhelm Pieck said on this score: "All our endeavours since 1945 to build up our democracy, our economy and our culture have clearly shown that the working class is best qualified to play the leading role in our society and to take Germany out of the impasse into which she had been led by the imperialist German bourgeoisie and the Junker class."<sup>19</sup>

At the same time, the Party congress had to take into account that with the attack on the Korean people and the remilitarization of the FRG, the most influential forces of imperialism had aggravated international tensions and that the threat of a third world war was looming over mankind.

Therefore, the 3rd Party Congress declared the struggle for the preservation of peace and the fight against imperialism to be the foremost obligations of the GDR. It

adopted measures designed to strengthen the movement for peace and the National Front. Otto Grotewohl, who dealt with these questions in a speech, stressed that in the confrontation between the two world camps the GDR was standing firmly by the USSR and the other socialist countries and that peace could be secured only in close friendship with the Soviet Union. He described it as the duty of the workers' and peasants' state to protect the gains of the working people.

The 3rd Party Congress decided to press on with the process of revolutionary transformation. It adopted a document that was decisive for strengthening workers' and peasants' power in every sphere: the draft of the first Five-Year-Plan for the development of the GDR economy in the period 1951-55, which was explained by Walter Ulbricht. The Five-Year-Plan, which was later given legal force by the People's Chamber with some amendments, provided *inter alia* for a doubling of industrial output by 1955, a 60 per cent rise in labour productivity in nationally owned industry, and a 60 per cent increase in national income. The aim was to attain and surpass the pre-war standard of living.

The most important economic projects were to create a domestic metallurgical basis, to expand the heavy engineering sector, to develop the country's raw materials potential and to build a merchant fleet. Only by accomplishing these tasks was it possible gradually to overcome the severe anomalies in the GDR's industrial sector, a legacy of capitalism that had been compounded by the war and the partitioning of the country. A particularly glaring discrepancy existed between the relatively advanced engineering industries and the weak metallurgical base. At the time the GDR had no more than three obsolete blast furnaces, whereas the actual requirements were 20 times greater. Nor was it capable of manufacturing the power generating equipment it needed. The GDR depended heavily on imports, notably raw materials. This, in turn, necessitated a rapid increase in exports, primarily machinery and manufactured goods.

The prime tasks in agriculture were to attain higher yields of crops and to breed larger and better livestock herds. Special efforts were required to promote the machine hiring stations and the state farms, the strongholds of the working class in the countryside. This was the way to keep strengthening the alliance between the working class and the peasantry, to back the democratic forces in rural areas and to prepare peasants and farm workers gradually for the socialist transformation of agriculture.

The 17,500 private capitalist firms existing in 1950, which accounted for a quarter of the country's industrial output, were to be drawn into economic planning through the state's economic, financial and tax policies and a system of contracts. For one thing, this was important from the standpoint of consumer supplies and, for another, it was entirely in keeping with the alliance policy pursued. Simultaneously, it was necessary to set limits to the growth of the private capitalist sector and to give priority to the development of the large nationally owned enterprises.

With its first Five-Year-Plan the GDR adopted long-term socialist economic planning not much later than most people's democracies. This plan and its implementation laid important foundations for socialism. As Walter Ulbricht said in his speech, the first Five-Year-Plan was based on "friendly relations and economic cooperation with the Soviet Union and the countries of the Peace Bloc. With the German Democratic Republic belonging to the big family of peace-loving states, it is possible for us to undertake reconstruction by our own efforts."<sup>20</sup>

The 3rd Party Congress noted that the role of the SED was growing in view of the increasing responsibility of the working class for the development of society. It adopted a new constitution of the SED, which incorporated the results of the SED's development as a Marxist-Leninist party and focussed the energies of members and candidate members more on the new tasks arising in socialist construction. It made decisions regarding party education

classes for all members, the exchange of membership cards and, to coincide with this, a reappraisal of all members and candidate members. All these measures were aimed at strengthening the SED further in political, ideological and organizational terms.

The Party Congress elected Wilhelm Pieck and Otto Grotewohl to be chairmen of the SED Central Committee, which superseded the Party Executive. The Central Committee elected the following as members of the Politbureau: Franz Dählem, Friedrich Ebert, Otto Grotewohl, Hermann Matern, Fred Oelssner, Wilhelm Pieck, Heinrich Rau, Walter Ulbricht and Wilhelm Zaisser. The following were elected as candidate members: Anton Ackermann, Rudolf Herrnstadt, Erich Honecker, Hans Jendretzky, Erich Mückenberger and Eill Schmidt. Walter Ulbricht was elected as general secretary of the SED Central Committee.

### 5. The opening phase of the Five-Year-Plan

On 1 January 1951 the foundation stone for the first blast furnace of the Ost iron and steel complex, the key project of the first Five-Year-Plan, was laid near Fürstenberg on the Oder river. Although there were hardly any specialists available in this field in the GDR, four blast furnaces were in operation by the end of 1952. The Soviet Union supplied the ore for the new plant, while Poland supplied the coal. In addition, the Soviet Union provided important technological data as well as experienced specialists. A further iron and steel mill was built simultaneously near Calbe, on the Saale river. The steel and rolling mills at Brandenburg, Gröditz, Hennigsdorf and Riesa were expanded as was the Maxhütte smelting works at Unterwellenborn.

With a view to making better use of domestic resources, the scientists Georg Bilkenroth and Erich Rammler devised a method of obtaining metallurgical coke from lignite of which the GDR has abundant supplies. A team led by Kurt Säuberlich developed the low-shaft furnace technique

which was then employed at Calbe to smelt domestic ore with a low iron content in a process involving high-temperature lignite coke. These breakthroughs in technology helped to reduce the GDR economy's dependence on the FRG.

Cooperation with the CMEA countries, above all the USSR, was vital for building up the socialist economy. In September 1951 the GDR signed its first long-term trade agreement with the USSR, followed by similar accords with Poland, Czechoslovakie and other socialist states. As of 1952 the socialist countries accounted for 74 per cent of the GDR's foreign trade turnover.

The first year of the Five-Year-Plan saw further measures aimed at a socialist organization of production in nationally owned enterprises, with collective agreements being concluded in nearly 5,000 factories. These took the place of the capitalist-type agreements which working people had formerly had to hammer out in the class struggle against the monopolies and the state. Incentive schemes were introduced in nationally owned industry on a large scale, and the first steps were undertaken to work out new production quotas, preferably on the basis of exact technological studies. More and more workers formed production teams on the Soviet model to replace capitalist patterns of shop floor organization. In order to ensure or augment the profitability of the nationally owned enterprises, the SED Central Committee decided at its 6th session in June 1951 to switch to new methods of factory management. Principles of cost accounting and a contractual system were to be introduced in nationally owned industry as they had in the Soviet Union. All this required strenuous efforts over a prolonged period of time. The experience of the GDR provided renewed proof that the introduction of socialist forms and methods of labour organization and economic management was among the most complicated tasks arising in the transition from capitalism to socialism.

The Five-Year-Plan gave fresh impetus to the campaign for greater efficiency, its socialist features coming in



Certificate awarded for outstanding contributions to national reconstruction

creasingly to the fore. At the Sachsenwerk Radeberg the turner Erich Wirth successfully applied a method first used by the Soviet turner Pavel Bykov, with a resultant striking increase in productivity. His example was followed by Luise Ermisch, Frieda Hockauf, Gerhard Opitz, Joseph Wenig and many others who likewise employed methods of Soviet innovators. They were acting on a slogan that had been coined by the SED: "To learn from the Soviet Union is the key to victory!" To meet the economy's rising demand for steel and to counter the effects of a steel embargo imposed by the FRG, the workers of the steel and rolling mills in the autumn of 1951 held a first special competition embracing the whole of the industry. In that year, over 9,000 teams acquired an honorary title for outstanding performance.

In the spring of 1952 the miner Franz Franik, an early follower of Adolf Hennecke, launched a campaign for collective efforts to increase productivity. He said that top workers should help others in their team to attain a similar standard. Just about that time Rudi Rubbel initiated a campaign for innovation and rationalization. The scope of that movement and the new forms devised, with SED members mostly in the van, were indicative of the high level of awareness present among the most advanced sections of the working population.

The same can be said for the National Reconstruction Scheme (NAW) initiated by the SED in the winter of 1951-52 and sponsored by the National Front. Within a brief span of time it developed into a socialist mass movement for the reconstruction of Berlin and other war-scarred cities, with people from all walks of life putting in stints of voluntary work and making financial contributions.

The SED, the FDGB, the FDJ and the National Front performed a large amount of work in order to make all working people aware of their new position in the state and the economy and gain further ground against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois views and attitudes. However, to forge a new consciousness was no easy task, given the

incessant anticommunist propaganda conducted by the imperialist media in the FRG and the open border with the imperialist system. There were those who, under the influence of imperialist propaganda, left the GDR in the hope of a more comfortable life in the FRG which was about to enter an economic boom. To instil in all working people a new consciousness was a protracted and complicated task.

After the founding of the GDR and the beginning of the first Five-Year-Plan, the revolutionary process in education, science and culture, which had begun in 1945, was systematically continued. Essentially, the aim was to tackle crucial tasks of the socialist cultural revolution.

The workers' and peasants' faculties (ABF), which had been established in October 1949 at universities and some other institutions of higher education proved their value as „nurseries" of a new, socialist intelligentsia. For thousands of young workers they opened the way to higher education. They were „serious-minded", mature people who had gone through the horrors of war", wrote Leo Gottschalk, first director of the ABF at the Freiberg School of Mines, about his pupils. „And they acquitted themselves admirably. Never before in Germany had the youth of a ruling class achieved anything equally impressive."<sup>21</sup>

Numerous new institutions of higher and technical education were founded to train cadres for the management of the state and the economy. Important foundations for a socialist development in higher education were laid with the provision that a year of study should cover ten months, with the decisions that from the autumn of 1951 all students would be taught the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism and the Russian language, and with the reorganization of the system of administration. The Institute for Social Sciences, attached to the SED Central Committee, was founded in December 1951 to train Marxist-Leninist cadres in the field of the social sciences. Marxism-Leninism assumed a firm place in the highest educational establishments of the GDR.

School education was likewise remoulded along socialist lines, with new curricula and textbooks being introduced and the first ten-year schools being set up in key industrial and agricultural areas. Through the agency of the parent-teacher associations, first elected in autumn 1951, the working class increased its influence on the development of the schools. Great efforts were also devoted to vocational training and the upgrading of skills.

Events testifying to an intense cultivation of the humanist heritage in the GDR included the activities and publications connected with the Goethe bicentennial in 1949, the Bach tricentenary celebrations in 1950, the 125th anniversary of Beethoven's death in 1952, the first Handel Festival in Halle in 1952, and the establishment of the National Research and Memorial Centre of Classical German Literature in Weimar and of the Ernst Barlach Memorial in Güstrow. The masterpieces of socialist Soviet literature and art had great popular appeal.

At its 5th session in March 1951 the SED Central Committee called on all those active in the cultural field to produce art and literature rooted in the working people. In poems, songs, short stories and, to some extent, in novels, Johannes R. Becher, Willi Bredel, Anna Seghers and other writers sought to portray the new realities with artistic means. In his novel *Menschen an unserer Seite*, published in 1951, Eduard Claudius became the first author in the history of German literature to depict workers freed from exploitation. Similarly, artists such as Walter Arnold, Fritz Cremer, Lea Grundig and Otto Nagel created works reflecting the new content of the labour movement. Songs composed by Hanns Eisler, Ernst Hermann Meyer and others won great popularity, especially among the young.

When the first official television programme was started on an experimental basis in December 1952, this meant that the socialist state had created a new medium which was to become an important factor in the period that followed.

## 6. The building of socialism in all areas of national life

With the establishment of a workers' and peasants' state and the commencement of the first Five-Year-Plan, the antifascist-democratic reformation had grown into the phase of socialist revolution. It had done so in a continuous process involving bitter struggle against imperialist reactionaries and their followers. The development of society had assumed distinctly socialist features. The SED had worked unflinchingly to convince the majority of the working class and the other working people of the need to build socialism. Indeed, this was the only way to safeguard the revolutionary gains and eliminate all socio-economic factors conducive to a restoration of the exploitative capitalist system.

The second party conference of the SED held in July 1952 was able to state: „The political and economic conditions as well as the awareness of the working class and the majority of working people have reached a stage where the building of socialism has become the central issue in the German Democratic Republic.”<sup>22</sup> Building on the policies hitherto pursued by the SED, notably the resolutions of the 3rd Party Congress, the party conference adopted guidelines for systematically laying the foundations of socialism in every area of national life. These guidelines, inspired by Lenin's plan of socialist construction, took into account the experience gained by the CPSU. Priority was given to consolidating the socialist state as the chief instrument of the working class in the building of socialism, systematically creating the economic foundations of socialism in industry and agriculture, and increasingly asserting the influence of socialist ideology and culture.

The resolutions of the second party conference met with an enthusiastic response among class-conscious workers and other working people. Otto Buchwitz, an early champion of working-class unity who was then 73 years old, echoed their feelings, especially those of older



people, in these words: „How much we have always wanted it! How much we have longed for it! We have kept it in our hearts like a sacred treasure. We have fought, suffered and made every conceivable sacrifice an individual can make for this, the most grandiose and magnificent of all ideas.

„We now see unfolding before us ... prospects which once existed only in our dreams."<sup>23</sup>

As suggested by the party conference, the administrative structure of the GDR was changed to make for a better direction of the socialist construction effort and to aid the development of socialist democracy. The *Länder* were abolished and 14 *Bezirke* (counties) formed, whilst the number of *Kreise* (districts) was increased. What emerged in this way was the territorial set-up which the GDR has to this day. Standing committees drawing numerous citizens into voluntary work were attached to county and district assemblies. To protect the working people's achievements, the stand-by units of the People's Police were transformed into the Garrisoned People's Police, 80 per cent of all men and officers coming from the working class and the peasantry. A system of local constables of the People's Police was set up with a view to further strengthening public order and security.

The summer of 1952 saw the emergence of the first cooperative farms (LPGs) in the GDR. They were for the most part formed by new farmers and farm workers, many of them affiliated to the SED. Most of the peasant farmers, however, especially the old-established owners of medium-sized farms, initially adopted a wait-and-see attitude, and many were unsympathetic. The bulk of the big farmers struck a posture of outright hostility to the cooperative farms.

The working class and the state helped the pioneers of the cooperative movement in agriculture to overcome the many difficult problems involved in the transition to large-scale socialist production. The farm machinery industry was built up at an accelerated pace with aid from the Soviet Union. The machine lending stations were

converted into machine-tractor stations (MTS), their numbers rising rapidly. They provided the cooperative farmers with machines and implements on favourable terms and helped them improve labour organization and develop cooperative democracy. Socialist industrial enterprises „adopted“ LPGs, making available harvesting and repair crews, and industrial workers joined cooperative farms. Protecting the fledgling LPGs from criminals, saboteurs and subversives became a high-priority task of the People's Police.

In its agricultural policy, the SED creatively applied Lenin's cooperative plan. It ensured the leading role of the working class in the socialist transformation of rural life, while at the same time seeing to it that this deep-going revolutionary process was primarily conducted by the peasants themselves, strict respect being given to the principle of voluntary participation. Even after the establishment of LPGs the SED and the state continued to assist private smallholders who were looked upon as prospective cooperative farmers.

The SED and the government discussed all fundamental questions concerning the development of the LPGs with the cooperative farmers. Most of the laws and decrees enacted in connection with the socialist transformation of agriculture were based on recommendations issued by LPG conferences held each year in December. The first LPG conference in 1952 adopted model statutes for three types of cooperatives. In the first type members would only pool their arable land. In the most advanced type they would pool all their land, meadows, pastures and woodland, complete with livestock, farm implements and machinery. By decision of the general meeting LPG members were able to retain a small portion of their arable land and livestock for private use.

After the socialist sector in agriculture had become sufficiently consolidated, the third LPG conference in 1954 recommended that big farmers of proven loyalty to the GDR who had acted up to their obligations should also be allowed to join cooperative farms.

## 7. For democratic reunification and a peace treaty

The endeavour to make use of the initially still existing opportunities for implementing the Potsdam Agreement in the FRG and hence overcoming the division of Germany occupied a central place in the policies of the SED and the government. In November 1950 Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl, in a message to the Chancellor of the FRG, proposed entering into negotiations on the establishment of an all-German Constituent Council whose function it would be to prepare elections for a National Assembly and the formation of a provisional, democratic government for all of Germany.

The „Grotewohl Letter“, as the GDR's initiative was widely known, triggered a flurry of activities, as a result of which the ruling circles in the FRG found themselves in a tight corner. In the period that followed the People's Chamber, the President, the government and the National Front submitted a number of similar proposals. By the end of 1952, government departments and public organizations in the GDR had presented over 100 such offers to their counterparts in the Federal Republic.

At the same time, the SED and the FDGB stepped up their efforts to establish, in spite of all differences, unity of action with the working class and its organizations in the FRG. At the first conference in support of united action, held in October 1950, Wilhelm Pieck and Otto Grotewohl discussed ways of conducting the joint struggle for the democratic reunification of Germany and against the remilitarization of the FRG with more than 1,000 members and officials of the KPD, the SPD and the German Trade Union Federation (DGB).

The initiatives of the USSR, the GDR and the other socialist countries met with a wide response. In the Federal Republic, as well as in France, Italy and other capitalist countries, millions of people protested against plans to rearm the FRG, urging acceptance of the proposals put forward by the socialist states. A plebiscite held in June



Poster for a plebiscite in both German states, June 1951: "A 'yes' vote is a vote against the remilitarization of Germany!"

1951 showed strong support for a German peace treaty and opposition to the remilitarization of the FRG, not only by the vast majority of the GDR's population, but also by nearly six million citizens of the FRG who had braved bans and persecution.

The GDR approved of the draft peace treaty which the government of the USSR put before the governments of the three western powers in March 1952. This provided for the establishment of a unitary democratic German state, which should maintain armed forces of its own, but not belong to any military alliance. The German people was to decide on its own what economic and social structure this state would have. In September 1952 a delegation of the People's Chamber went to Bonn for talks with

the Bundestag on the participation of GDR and FRG representatives in a four-power conference on a German peace treaty as proposed by the Soviet Union.

However, the ruling circles in the FRG, just like the imperialist western powers, rejected all proposals of the socialist states, thus ignoring the demands of millions of people, because negotiations on a peace treaty and the democratic reunification of Germany would have run counter to their plans to set up an anti-Soviet bloc including a remilitarized Federal Republic. In May 1952 they signed the treaty establishing the „European Defence Community“, which was to prepare the way for the incorporation of the FRG into NATO.

The right-wing Social Democrat and trade union leaders encouraged this policy and, in fact, made it possible by preventing the establishment of a united front against militarism in the FRG and deepening the split in the working class. The monopoly bourgeoisie managed to take the sting out of the popular movement against remilitarization and to alter the realities of power in the Federal Republic in its favour. This reduced the chances of a democratic path of development in the FRG and, hence, of a united Germany that would be a peace-loving and democratic state.

Even so the GDR continued to work towards this end for several more years. As long as there was the slightest chance of attaining this aim it was anxious to seize it in order to prevent the nation from being torn apart once and for all.

Although the struggle for democratic reunification and for a peace treaty was not crowned with success, it was not in vain. It complicated and delayed the remilitarization of the FRG and the latter's integration into NATO. In the GDR, it promoted the close union of all democratic forces united in the National Front, which rallied about the working class and its Marxist-Leninist party. The SED, in cherishing and continuing the great traditions of the national and anti-imperialist struggle of the revolutionary German labour movement, proved once again the con-

sistent advocate of the vital interests of the people. In marked contrast, the German monopoly bourgeoisie in the FRG, faced with the national policy of the GDR, proved once again an anti-national force inimical to the people which, for the sake of exploitation and profit, in the end completely destroyed the unity of the nation.

### 8. The cold war against the GDR

From its inception the GDR was exposed to imperialism's cold war to a particular degree. According to the plans of influential imperialist politicians the elimination of the GDR was to mark the beginning of the process of „rolling back“ socialism in Europe. As was declared repeatedly, the combined strength of the West would force the Soviet Union to „abandon“ the GDR and make it possible for a German state to be restored on the model of the FRG within the pre-war frontiers. This was to be, in the words of Konrad Adenauer, the first step to a „new order in Europe.“<sup>24</sup>

West Berlin was built up into a kind of NATO „bridge-head“. It became the starting-point of many hostile activities directed against the socialist countries. Reactionary politicians took advantage of the open border between the GDR and West Berlin for their own ends, equally exploiting the GDR economy's dependence on the FRG which existed for quite some time, family and personal ties, and links in the religious sphere. The cold war against the GDR was being conducted with embargoes, currency manipulation, an organized brain drain, and the infiltration of spys and agents provocateurs who carried out numerous acts of terror and sabotage. The mass media, whose unbridled anticommunist propaganda reached the GDR in many forms, were used in an attempt to sow confusion and strife and to incite the population to take a stand against the workers' and peasants' state. The government of the FRG, the bourgeois parties, and the SPD leadership as well, sought to discredit the GDR's

political system, describing it as „illegitimate“ and arrogating to themselves the right to speak in the name of all people of German nationality and all German territories. Accordingly, the FRG government refused to enter into any negotiations with the leaders of the GDR, resorting to methods bordering on blackmail to keep other states from taking up normal relations with the GDR.

At the beginning of 1953 the newly elected President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, proclaimed the „roll back“ strategy and the nuclear doctrine of „massive retaliation“ their official government policy. Their aim was to overthrow the socialist order by applying outward military pressure—if necessary to the brink of war—and by activating counter-revolutionary forces inside the socialist countries. This aggravation of the cold war by the new US administration encouraged the reactionary forces in the FRG to step up quite considerably their preparations for „D-Day“, the scheduled date for the overthrow of the workers' and peasants' state in the GDR. The „Advisory Research Council on Questions Relating to the Reunification of Germany“, which included right-wing leaders of the SPD and the DGB, worked out detailed plans for the restoration of capitalist conditions in the GDR. Imperialist espionage agencies and underground counter-revolutionary groups existing in the GDR (most of them controlled by former Nazi activists) increased their subversive activities. Similarly, the ongoing psychological warfare and the campaign to disrupt the GDR's economy were geared to „D-Day“.

The cold war pursued by imperialism inflicted heavy damage on the GDR, complicating the building of socialism. Under the influence of the cold war there occurred an aggravation of the social contradictions existing in the GDR during the transition from capitalism to socialism, notably between socialist and capitalist forces. Private entrepreneurs hostile to the workers' and peasants' state and other reactionary elements among the middle classes and the big farmers caused damage to the socialist con-

struction effort. Former capitalist, fascist and militarist forces who had been employed in nationally owned enterprises as industrial or office workers but had remained enemies of socialism, were increasingly coming out into the open. For all the advance that had been made in the development of people's awareness, reactionary bourgeois views had not yet been overcome among sections of the population, notably petty bourgeois segments, with anticommunist and nationalist views still a factor to be reckoned with. Such attitudes were being constantly fed by the relentless virulence of the imperialist media.

In their endeavour to resolve the difficult problems on their hands, the SED and the government made some decisions which turned out to have been wrong. Thus, it was decided in the autumn of 1952 to develop heavy industry at an accelerated pace. This, however, led to a slowdown in the growth of the consumer goods industry which in turn had negative effects on the situation of working people, provoking discontent.

In early June 1953 the SED and the government adopted a number of fundamental measures designed to stabilize the socialist state and the economy and to improve working people's living conditions. Faced with these decisions, the imperialist reactionaries saw their plans in jeopardy, a fact which prompted them to pursue their plans for „D-Day“ with even greater intensity.

On 17 June 1953 work stoppages and demonstrations occurred in Berlin and some other cities of the GDR. Illegal counter-revolutionary groups, acting on the instructions of radio stations and espionage centres in West Berlin and the FRG, took advantage of the discontent among working people in order to stage a counter-revolutionary putsch. Numerous agents provocateurs were being infiltrated into the GDR from West Berlin.

The counter-revolutionary elements called for the removal of the SED and the government, forced their way into party offices, government departments and department stores, destroying property and starting fires.

Class-conscious workers offering resistance were man- handled and murdered.

However, the counter-revolutionary putsch remained unsuccessful. A growing number of demonstrators dis- sociated themselves from the agents provocateurs who were engaging in a Nazi-style orgy of violence. De- termined action by the Soviet troops stationed in the GDR prevented a military conflict which would have had in- calculable consequences. The putsch was foiled very quickly thanks to the conduct of the troops and to the action of class-conscious workers who in many cases drove agents provocateurs from the factories under the guidance of the local party branches and of the security organs of the GDR who steadfastly fulfilled their duties.

The SED Central Committee took steps to safeguard the unity and strength of the party and the socialist state. It drew important conclusions from what had so far been the most dangerous onslaught by the enemies of the workers' and farmers' state. On its initiative, an armed workers' militia was set up in July 1953 to defend the gains of the revolution. The alliance with the peasantry and the SED's cooperation with the other parties and mass organizations within the Democratic Bloc and the National Front emerged intact from the attempted coun- ter-revolutionary putsch. The alliance policy of the SED had stood up to an historic test.

The soviet Union stepped up its solidarity and support for the GDR. In August 1953 the government of the USSR decided to renounce any further deliveries by way of reparations and, in agreement with the Polish govern- ment, to absolve the GDR from making the still out- standing reparations payment of 2,540 million dollars. It handed over the remaining 33 Soviet State Concerns to the GDR. On balance, this represented a value of 13,500 million marks which could be used for continued eco- nomic construction and the improvement of working people's living conditions. Other socialist countries, for their part, helped the GDR through additional supplies of consumer goods and raw materials.

The exchange of workers' delegations between the GDR and the USSR was increased substantially. Soviet workers communicated to their class brothers in the GDR the rich experience they had gained in the building of socialism and in the struggle against imperialism and counter-revolution.

The solidarity displayed by the USSR and the other socialist states was the decisive factor that enabled the GDR to hold its own in the cold war which imperialism had unleashed and which was continued in the following years by a variety of methods.

### **9. The Warsaw Treaty and the GDR-USSR State Treaty**

The imperialist "roll back" policy was exceedingly dan- gerous, but it had no chance of success. This had already been indicated by some of the events of 1953. In July of that year the USA found itself compelled to sign an armis- tice at Panmunjon in Korea. Washington's attempt to push back socialism by military means had ended in failure, as had the counter-revolutionary coup against the workers' and peasants' state in the GDR. In the summer of 1953 the first test of a thermonuclear weapon and delivery system was carried out in the Soviet Union. This meant that, for all practical purposes, the imperialist policy of nuclear blackmail predicated on a US monopoly of nuclear weapons had failed.

It was largely because of these events that the western powers, for the first time since 1949, agreed to a Soviet proposal to hold a conference of the foreign ministers of the USSR, the USA, the UK and France. The conference met in Berlin in early 1954. Once again the western pow- ers rejected the Soviet proposal to initiate measures towards the democratic reunification of Germany and to halt preparations for the remilitarization of the Federal Republic of Germany. Equally, they dismissed the princi- ples of an all-European treaty and collective security, then

submitted by the Soviet Union for the first time. Yet the idea of collective security was henceforth a factor to be reckoned with. To an increasing extent, it would make its impact felt in the international class struggle between socialism and imperialism.

There was, of course, still a long way to go before the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe could be held in Helsinki. For many years thereafter it remained the declared aim of the USA and its allies to "roll back" socialism by every means available, including armed forces. It was with this purpose in mind—and not, as bourgeois politicians and historians claim to this day, to "defend the Free World"—that in October 1954 the foreign ministers of the USA, the UK, France, Belgium, the FRG, Italy, Canada, Luxembourg and the Netherlands signed what were to become known as the Paris Agreements, which became effective in May 1955.

Under the Paris Agreements the FRG was admitted to NATO, which fact enabled it to build up a 500,000-man army. American, British and French troops were to remain stationed indefinitely on the territory of the Federal Republic. The NATO states reaffirmed the FRG's claim to speak on behalf all Germans. They said their common aim was a "reunited Germany having a liberal democratic constitution similar to that of the Federal Republic and integrated into the European Community."<sup>25</sup> They could hardly have expressed in plainer terms that they wanted to see an imperialist German state modelled on the FRG which would from the outset be a constituent part of NATO. The definitive German frontiers were not to be drawn until the conclusion of a peace treaty with that state. This meant that the existing frontiers of Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union were practically called in question. Also, the NATO states reaffirmed West Berlin's role as a front-line city in the cold war.

The Paris Agreements had grave consequences. As history has shown, these accords cemented the division of Europe into mutually opposed military blocs for a long time. They tied the FRG to US imperialism and its policy

of seeking world domination. They "legalized" the rebirth of German militarism which it had been the declared aim of the anti-Hitler coalition to destroy. In this way they were creating a dangerous source of international tensions. For many years the FRG was the number one trouble maker in Europe.

The incorporation of the Federal Republic into NATO marked the parting of the ways on the German question. What the USSR, the GDR and the other socialist states had foreseen in their warnings became true: The Paris Agreements barred the way to the establishment of a unitary and democratic German state. They cemented the partition of Germany. The aggressive policies of the monopoly bourgeoisie in the FRG, supported by the right-wing leaders of the Social Democratic Party, destroyed the possibility—still existing after 1949—of the German nation developing further in a unitary state on a new social basis. What had emerged on German soil were two states with irreconcilable sociopolitical systems and principles of domestic and foreign policy: the socialist GDR and the imperialist FRG. While a socialist nation began to evolve in the GDR, a bourgeois nation with characteristic class antagonisms continued to exist in the FRG. Unification between the GDR and the FRG had become impossible.

Once the Paris Agreements had come into force, the Bundeswehr was built up at a rapid pace with support from the United States. Former generals of the Nazi Wehrmacht assumed all senior positions. The imperialists had thereby extended the sphere of their aggressive military pact right to the boundaries of the world socialist system in central Europe. The Federal Republic was cast in the role of a spearhead directed against socialism. The most aggressive quarters of imperialism believed that by relying on NATO it would be possible in the foreseeable future to revoke the results of the Second World War and of post-war developments and to "roll back" socialism after all.

These objectives were, however, based on a mis-

calculation of the real constellation of forces. The determining factor in further developments was not NATO and the adventurist schemes of its originators, but the mounting strength of the forces committed to peace, democracy and socialism.

The most important event in the eventful year of 1955 was one that looked far ahead: the conclusion of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance which the heads of government of the USSR, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Hungary, Poland, and Romania signed in Warsaw on 11 May 1955. This accord, which was to go down in history as the Warsaw Treaty, was a result of the conclusions which the socialist countries involved had drawn from the new situation. The united armed forces of the Warsaw Treaty states with the Soviet army as their mainstay assumed the joint national and international task of protecting the socialist community and its member nations from any attack. The signing of the Warsaw Treaty ushered in a higher stage of cooperation between the socialist states in all areas. Political, economic and cultural collaboration attained a new stage. The joint top political body of the member states, the Political Consultative Committee, subsequently developed into the most important organ for the coordination of their common foreign policy.

The Warsaw Treaty corresponded to the United Nations Charter and to the principles of the Potsdam Agreement. It served to safeguard and strengthen the territorial *status quo*—unlike NATO which had expressly described its alteration as one of its objectives. The Warsaw Treaty was an expression and an instrument of the policy of collective security in Europe pursued by the socialist countries. In contradistinction to NATO the Warsaw Treaty states said it was one of the aims of their joint foreign policy to create a system of collective security in Europe.

Membership in the Warsaw Treaty Organization was and remains a matter of utmost importance for the GDR. It protects the workers' and peasants' state from any enemy attack and ensures favourable conditions for so-

cialist construction. The GDR became an integral part of the multilateral system of treaties established by the socialist states. Its friendly relations with the USSR and the other fraternal countries became ever closer in every sphere of activity. The GDR was able to make a more effective contribution to the defence of socialism and to enhancing its international influence.

Reflecting the new stage attained in cooperation between the GDR and the USSR was the treaty on relations between the two states signed in Moscow on 20 September 1955. In this first friendship treaty of the German workers' and peasants' state, which went down in history as the GDR—USSR State Treaty, both sides agreed to intensify their political, economic, scientific, technological and cultural relations and to give each other every possible aid in the building of socialism. They undertook to hold consultations on all international issues affecting them and jointly to take all measures required in order to prevent any breach of peace. The treaty fixed the sovereignty of the GDR in terms of constitutional and international law.

Membership in the Warsaw Treaty Organization and the State Treaty with the USSR strengthened the GDR's international position. In 1955, despite continuing imperialist attempts to blackmail countries prepared to establish links with the GDR, official trade missions of the GDR were set up in India, Egypt, Sudan, Indonesia, Syria and Burma. In August 1955 the GDR called for admission to UNESCO.

In order to prevent the GDR's international recognition as a sovereign state with equal rights and to keep the road open for its policies of aggression, the FRG government proclaimed its so-called Hallstein Doctrine in the autumn of 1955, under which the establishment of normal relations with the GDR on the part of other states would automatically be answered by the FRG with the rupture of its own diplomatic relations with these states. The Hallstein Doctrine, meant to enforce Bonn's claim to be the sole spokesman of all Germans on the diplomatic

front in violation of international law, was an instrument of the cold war. It complicated relations between states with different social systems and proved a serious obstacle on the road to a stable structure of peace in Europe. But in the long run, not even such a move could prevent the GDR from assuming its rightful place in the world arena.

The mounting aggressiveness of imperialism made it necessary for the GDR to set up armed forces. On 18 January 1956 the People's Chamber adopted a law establishing the National People's Army (NVA). Initially, it was a volunteer force. Officers, non-commissioned officers and men came mostly from the working class and the peasantry, and the senior officers had proved themselves in the struggle against fascism.

In the shape of the NVA there emerged a German army of a new, socialist type. It constitutes an instrument of military power of the working class and the other working people. In close comradeship-in-arms with the Soviet army and the other armies of the socialist defence alliance, the NVA serves to defend the vital interests of the people, to protect socialism and safeguard peace along the western border of the world socialist system. From the first, the leading role of the working class and its party has been the supreme principle in the establishment of the NVA and in the training and education of its personnel.

#### 10. The third party conference of the SED

The third party conference of the SED met from 24 to 30 March 1956. It was able to state that owing to the commitment shown by the working people the objectives of the first Five-Year-Plan had been largely attained notwithstanding the difficulties that had been caused, especially by the cold war. This meant that compared with 1950 the country's industrial output had almost doubled. The GDR now had its own metallurgical sector and heavy

industry as well as an efficient mechanical engineering sector. While this made it possible to relieve the grave imbalances that existed in the national economy, it became clear that it would take a prolonged period before these could be fully overcome.

One of the most important technological achievements of those years was the invention by Heinrich Mauersberger of the Malimo or stitch-bonding technique in the textile industry, which led to an appreciable rise in labour productivity. Yet in view of the largely obsolete equipment used in industry and because of the imperialist economic war the raising of labour productivity proved to be the most difficult task of all. The growth rate recorded was 54 per cent instead of a projected 60 per cent.

The GDR's foreign trade had made rapid headway, with exports more than tripling and the socialist countries accounting for 72 per cent of the total. The GDR was the second largest trading partner of the USSR and of most other CMEA countries. The Leipzig Fair, with a tradition stretching back 800 years, reasserted its position as one of the world's leading trade fairs.

The agricultural sector was also developing well. Livestock herds had been increased, and yields per hectare had risen, sometimes considerably. One contributing factor had been the machine and tractor stations whose machine pool had been greatly expanded.

In socio-economic terms, the most important result was the strengthening of the socialist sector of the national economy. In 1955 this accounted for 87.6 per cent of gross industrial production and for 27.4 per cent of agricultural output. During the Five-Year-Plan period the total work force had gone up from 5.3 to 6.4 million, with the number of workers in socialist industry showing a particularly steep rise. Even so, more than half a million people continued to be employed in private industrial enterprises. The total figure for the entire private sector, including craft establishments and farms, was 1.6 million, i. e. a quarter of the work force.



The GDR's socio-economic structure was characteristic of the transitional stage through which it was passing. Socialism had already gained a firm foothold, but strenuous efforts were still needed to accomplish all the tasks of that transitional period.

The fulfilment of the Five-Year-Plan made it possible to improve the living conditions of the working people. The average monthly gross earnings of blue and white collar workers rose from 256 to 365 marks generally and from 311 to 432 marks in the socialist sector of the economy. During the same period retail prices were reduced by 32 per cent. Hunger, misery and homelessness—a legacy of the war—had been overcome for years, and unemployment had long become an alien concept. The Five-Year-Plan saw a substantial rise in per capita food consumption, but there was a shortage of high-quality consumer durables which were in great demand. Bottlenecks occurred repeatedly in the field of consumer supplies. Housing space was extremely scarce, and compared with the pre-war period more people had to live in fewer dwellings. The continued building of socialism offered the guarantee that these problems, too, would gradually be solved.

Reviewing the results of the revolutionary process initiated in 1945, notably the progress achieved in laying the foundations of socialism, Walter Ulbricht, First Secretary of the SED Central Committee, noted at the third party conference: „The development of the German Democratic Republic can no longer be seen in isolation from the development of the socialist camp at large. Herein lies the chief safeguard for the future successes of the German Democratic Republic.“<sup>26</sup> All the resolutions of the party conference were aimed at the further building up and strengthening of the foundations of socialism with a view to increasingly satisfying the growing material and cultural needs of the working people and contributing to the strengthening of world socialism.

The directives for the second Five-Year-Plan adopted by the party conference provided for the establishment of an

efficient socialist economy based on advanced technology. This required modernizing obsolete production plant and giving high priority to the promotion of key industries, notably basic industry, mechanical engineering, energy, fuel, and chemicals. The mounting economic potential of the GDR was the decisive prerequisite for systematically raising working people's standard of living.

The SED stressed the need to ensure that socialist relations of production prevailed in all sectors while achieving a further increase in industrial and agricultural output. Above all, it was necessary to consolidate the cooperative farms, to develop them into exemplary socialist enterprises and to win over more peasants for cooperative work. The MTS were to be provided with more and better machines, and existing equipment was to be used more effectively.

At the same time, the party conference made it clear what prospects there were for other forms of ownership. It decided to give further encouragement to the creation of craft production cooperatives (PGH), which had got under way in 1952. It proposed that private retail traders and restaurateurs enter into commission agreements with the state-run trade organization. The party conference recommended that the socialist state acquire a share in private businesses, a measure aimed at the gradual transformation of the private capitalist sector in industry on socialist lines. Accordingly, the state obtained an interest in such firms, brought its influence to bear on their management and received a certain portion of the profits. In this way the SED creatively applied Lenin's ideas about state capitalism in the transitional period to the conditions prevailing in the GDR.

These measures, which also took into account proposals by the other Democratic Bloc parties, were designed to raise the output and the services of the private sector in industry, trade and distribution, and crafts, thereby securing further improvements in consumer supplies. Favourable international and domestic conditions—notably the strengthening of the socialist sector in industry

and the close cooperation existing between the Democratic Bloc parties under the leadership of the SED—made it possible in the GDR to draw craftsmen, tradesmen and entrepreneurs into the socialist construction effort. Those belonging to these strata were offered the opportunity to bring their skills and experience to the task of building a new social system.

The SED noted that the safeguarding of peace had become the central issue in the relationship between the GDR and the FRG. It pronounced itself in favour of a system of collective security in Europe to which both German states should belong. Since the *faits accomplis* created by imperialism ruled out a unification of the GDR and the FRG, the only alternative was the establishment of normal relations between the two states. This presupposed the ending of imperialism's cold war against the GDR and the other socialist states.

In the event of fundamental democratic changes in the Federal Republic, which could only be achieved through class struggle, the SED envisaged the possibility of creating, in the long run, conditions for a gradual rapprochement between the GDR and the FRG, to be followed later by their unification on an anti-imperialist and democratic basis. In 1957 the SED and the government proposed seeking the establishment of a confederation as a form of peaceful coexistence and rapprochement.

The third party conference stressed the importance of the 20th Congress of the CPSU, which had been held in February 1956. The 20th Party Congress had concluded that given the changed international constellation of forces there was now a distinct possibility of preventing imperialism from unleashing a new world war. It emphasized that new and more favourable conditions had emerged for the transition of further countries to socialism and for the application of new forms and methods of socialist revolution. The congress adopted measures directed towards the complete elimination of the personality cult around J. V. Stalin, a phenomenon alien to Marxism-Leninism, and towards the full restoration and

strict observance of Lenin's standards of party life. The resolutions of the 20th CPSU Congress pointed the way for the policies pursued by the socialist states in the construction of socialism, in the struggle for peace and in the fight against imperialism.

### 11. The strengthening of the socialist state

The further strengthening of the socialist state was a decisive prerequisite for accomplishing the principal tasks of the transitional period. In addition, the mounting aggressiveness of imperialism called for the reinforcement of state power. This was strikingly brought home in the autumn of 1956 when antisocialist forces supported by imperialist secret services staged a counter-revolutionary putsch in the Hungarian People's Republic and, almost simultaneously, Israel, France and Great Britain mounted a war of aggression against Egypt. Together with the Soviet army, the class-conscious forces of the Hungarian working class foiled the counter-revolutionary coup. Similarly, the imperialist aggression against Egypt suffered a fiasco because of the firm stance adopted by the Soviet Union and the resistance offered by the Egyptian people. The working people of the GDR extended solidarity and aid to their Hungarian class brothers and to the Egyptian people.

Imperialist attempts designed to sow discord and confusion in the GDR and to trigger a counter-revolutionary putsch there as well as at this time of aggravated class struggle were nipped in the bud under the leadership of the SED. The security organs smashed numerous agents' groups. Some revisionist elements who began to come forward with antisocialist views remained isolated. The workers' militia demonstrated their resolve to resist any provocation with determination. In close alliance with the Soviet Union the workers' and peasants' state passed an historic test.

In January 1957 the People's chamber passed a law on

local government and a law defining the rights and duties of the People's chamber vis-à-vis the local representative bodies. The draft laws had been discussed by 4.5 million citizens. In February 1958 the People's Chamber adopted a law on improving and simplifying the work of the state apparatus.

These laws gave broader powers to the local representative bodies as the supreme organs of government at the local level and extended the rights and duties of deputies. The People's Chamber was responsible for supervising the activities of the local representative bodies, providing guidance and helping them in the execution of their duties. All representative bodies were required to draw a growing number of workers and other citizens in the running of the state and the economy and to do so directly and in close touch with the trade unions and the National Front.

The rights of nationally owned enterprises (VEB) and their managers were also enlarged. Seventy-four associations of nationally owned enterprises (VVB) were formed to serve as guiding bodies for centrally administered VEB's. The responsibilities of the now defunct industrial ministries devolved upon the VVB's, local organs of government and the State Planning Commission. The State Planning Commission, an organ of the Council of Ministers, was made responsible for ensuring the balanced development of the national economy and coordinating the most important economic projects.

The implementation of all these measures led to the further strengthening of the state and to the development of socialist democracy. The organs of state were now better equipped to fulfil their economic and organizational tasks as well as their cultural and educational functions.

The experience gathered by the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and other socialist countries was taken into account in preparing and enacting this legislation. Valuable suggestions resulted from the commencement in 1960 of an exchange of delegations between the Execu-

tive Committee of the Moscow Soviet and the Berlin Municipal Council, as well as between county capitals and partner cities in the Soviet Union.

The first president of the GDR and long-time chairman of the KPD and SED, Wilhelm Pieck, died in September 1960. The whole nation mourned his death.

The People's Chamber decided to set up a Council of State as a collective head of state and elected Walter Ulbricht, First Secretary of the SED Central Committee, as chairman of the newly created body.

Walter Ulbricht, born in Leipzig in 1893 and a joiner by trade, joined the trade union in 1910, the SPD in 1912 and the KPD in 1919, henceforth occupying senior positions in the latter party. In 1927 he became a member of the Politbureau. Walter Ulbricht was one of the leading organizers of the antifascist resistance. He played a prominent part in the merger of the KPD and the SPD which led to the founding of the SED, of which he had been a leading member ever since. From 1950 he was general secretary and from 1953 first secretary of the SED Central Committee. Within the collective party leadership Walter Ulbricht made a great contribution to the emergence and consolidation of the GDR, the building of socialism in firm alliance with the Soviet Union, and the struggle against imperialism.

The following were elected vice-chairmen of the Council of State: Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl, Johannes Dieckmann and Manfred Gerlach (both members of the LDPD), Gerald Götting (CDU), Heinrich Homann (NDPD) and Hans Rietz (DBD). The Council of State included representatives of all parties and mass organizations, all classes and strata of the population. Its composition reflected the leading role of the working class and its close alliance with the other working people within the National Front.

The new status of working people under socialism found its expression in the Labour Code which the People's Chamber adopted in April 1961 after extensive deliberations involving millions of citizens. The law as-

sured all workers, salaried employees and members of the intelligentsia the right to a job, to equal pay for equal work, and to active participation in the management and planning of the economy.

## 12. Coal, energy and chemicals

What was involved in building up an efficient socialist economy whose various parts were closely interconnected was not simply the continued reconstruction of industrial plant, but their technological modernization and a policy of giving top priority to the development of selected industries and the establishment of new ones—in other words, the creation of a new economic structure.

A matter of especial significance was the provision of fuels and energy for the fast-expanding economy. Under the government's March 1957 coal and energy programme half of all industrial investment went into the development of coal mining and energy production. The biggest project of this programme was the construction of the Schwarze Pumpe lignite combine (named after an old pub on the premises) in Cottbus county. By the end of 1958 all key installations of the first stage had been completed in the rough. At the same time, a new dormitory town was built at Hoyerswerda for the workers and builders of the combine.

The construction of the lignite combine went hand in hand with the industrialization of Cottbus county. It represented an example of how a socialist state was systematically closing the gap between industrial centres and less developed farming areas, a typical feature of the capitalist system.

A number of large power stations were being built or expanded: Berzdorf, Elbe, Lübbenau and Trattendorf. As a result, the country's energy output rose by 21.5 per cent between 1956 and 1958. The GDR gained valuable experience in the utilization of potentially important sources of energy when with Soviet support it started building its first nuclear power station at Rheinsberg in 1957.

In November 1958 a conference held by the SED Central Committee and the State Planning Commission adopted a programme for the accelerated development of the GDR's chemical industry, which had been coordinated with similar programmes in the other CMEA countries. It provided for a doubling of the output of the chemical industry by 1965 and the establishment of a new industry—the petrochemical industry. The year 1959 saw the beginning of the construction of the Schwedt oil refinery complex, the Leuna II plant and the Guben man-made fibre complex. Major enterprises that underwent expansion included the Buna chemical plant, the Bitterfeld electrochemical combine, the Lützkendorf mineral oil plant and the Schwarza man-made fibre plant.

The programme envisaged the growing production and utilization of plastic material and man-made fibres. Decisive foundations for oil refining and petrochemistry were laid in 1959 when the Friendship oil line linking the Soviet Union, Poland and the GDR got under way.

The mechanical and electrical engineering sectors, the metal goods industry, and the precision engineering and optical sectors were also being developed at an accelerated pace in response to the requirements of scientific and technological progress. Some industries such as the manufacture of power generating plant, semiconductors and automatic control equipment, were built up virtually from scratch. Production-line techniques were being used for the first time in housing construction.

Examples of industrialization in the northern parts of the GDR were the construction of the Volkswerft (shipyard) at Stralsund, which began in 1958, and the expansion of the Rostock deep-sea harbour and the Warnowwerft (shipyard) at Warnemünde. Special efforts were made to speed up the development of the Heiligenstadt and Worbis districts in the Eichsfeld, which had long been among the most depressed of all German regions. In early 1961 the construction of the GDR's largest cotton spinning mill was begun at Leinefelde, Worbis district. By 1977 4,000 people from various places in the Eichsfeld

were working in this large and modern socialist enterprise.

The Rapp-Bode dam, inaugurated in October 1959, was built in order to ensure adequate water supplies for the region lying at the foot of the Harz mountains, a highly industrialized area. Such plans had been in existence since the end of the previous century, but they did not become reality until the advent of the workers' and peasants' state which took into account new developments and fitted the project into its plans for socialist construction.

For the building of a modern socialist economy cooperation within the framework of the CMEA was of crucial importance. Coordination of member countries' economic plans was making progress. In particular, the GDR stepped up its economic, scientific and technological collaboration with the Soviet Union. Joint economic committees, set up with the USSR and other socialist countries, initiated the first steps towards specialization and division of labour in production and gave special encouragement to direct cooperation between major enterprises and institutes.

Workers in the chemical industry launched a campaign for socialist team work, continuing the pioneering efforts that had been made in this field by the miner Adolf Hennecke and his followers, the Franke brigades and other initiators of efficiency and emulation drives. The socialist labour teams, first set up in 1959 at the Bitterfeld electrochemical combine on the model of the communist labour teams in the Soviet Union, set themselves the aim of working, learning and living in a socialist way.

The "Young Innovators' Fairs", held annually since 1958, proved to have great potential. A mere 25 novelties were exhibited at the first "hobbyists' show", as the event was then known, in Berlin's Haus der Jungen Talente. Twenty years later young Berliners required almost the whole of the Werner-Seelenbinder-Halle, an indoor sports centre, to present the best out of some 15,000 innovations.

Scientific advances made it possible for people's living conditions to be improved further. In 1957 weekly hours in socialist industry and in the transport and communications sector were reduced to 45 without changes in pay. In 1958 the last remaining food rationing measures were ended. For the first time, passenger cars, motor cycles, television sets, radios, refrigerators, washing machines and other consumer durables were put on the market in substantial quantities and, to some extent, in better quality. Mass production of the Trabant passenger car was begun in July 1958. While it had long been common for many citizens to spend their annual holidays on the Baltic or in the highlands of the GDR, there was now also a growing number of people visiting other socialist countries. As it turned out, however, several plan targets aimed at higher living standards for the working people, proved too ambitious and could not be attained within the period of time originally envisaged.

### 13. The socialist cultural revolution

Instilling a socialist consciousness in all citizens of the GDR was a matter of extraordinary importance for the victory of socialist production relations and in the struggle against imperialism. The SED outlined its position in this regard in detail at its 5th Party Congress in July 1958, which discussed the task of bringing the period of transition from capitalism to socialism in the GDR largely to its conclusion. The congress emphasized: "The better all working people are aware of socialism's superiority over capitalism, of the correctness of the socialist option and of the historic role of the German Democratic Republic ... the more conscious their participation in accomplishing the economic, political and cultural tasks arising in the continued building of socialism. the higher the level of socialist consciousness of all working people, the faster the pace of socialist development and the greater the advances in the economy, in science and culture."<sup>27</sup>

In line with this, numerous measures directed towards the continuation of the socialist revolution in the fields of ideology and culture were initiated by the 5th Party Congress. In December 1959 the People's Chamber passed a law on the socialist development of school education, which had previously been the subject of a nation-wide public debate. It provided that within a span of five years the ten-year general polytechnical school should be introduced to form the backbone of the GDR's entire education system. The last remaining single-teacher schools in rural areas were abolished. It was thus possible, in a matter of years, to end once and for all the backward status of the former "village school" which had existed for centuries.

Programmes for the socialist transformation of universities and colleges charted the course of development for important disciplines and institutes. In confrontation with reactionary theories and unscientific views, Marxism-Leninism gained supremacy in many disciplines, notably in the social sciences. Increasingly, members of the new intelligentsia that had emerged from the working class assumed positions of responsibility. At the same time, a growing number of intellectuals with a bourgeois background, most of them eminent specialists, shed lingering doubts and reservations and committed themselves to the building of socialism in what was a very complicated process. A contributing factor was the many clarifying talks which members of the SED Central Committee's Politbureau conducted with the intelligentsia.

The scientific and technological community was confronted with great challenges in the process of achieving scientific and technological progress, as reflected by the establishment in August 1957 of a Research Council attached to the Council of Ministers of the GDR. It consisted of distinguished scientists such as Manfred von Ardenne, Georg Bilkenroth, Max Steenbeck and Peter Adolf Thiessen as well as leading figures of the state and the economy. The Research Council helped ensure that the results of Soviet science and technology, which was of

a high standard as exemplified by the launching in October 1957 of Sputnik, the first artificial earth satellite, were assessed more thoroughly and used more methodically.

The striving for a socialist culture produced literary works and works of art which mirrored the development trends characteristic of the period of transition from capitalism to socialism and which analysed and described the complicated metamorphosis which people were undergoing. They included poems and novels by Bruno Apitz, whose novel *Naked among Wolves*, set in Buchenwald concentration camp, found a readership in many countries, Johannes R. Becher, Willi Bredel, Juri Brëzan, Louis Fürnberg, Hans Marchwitza, Anna Seghers, and Erwin Strittmatter. Günter Görlich, Herbert Jobst, Herbert Nachbar, Dieter Noll and others were examples of a new, socialist generation of writers. Bertolt Brecht's dramatic output and theatrical productions acquired a world reputation as did Walter Felsenstein's realistic musical theatre. New standards were set by works of Walter Arnold, Fritz Cremer (famed especially for his Buchenwald monument), Lea Grundig, René Graetz, Hans Kies and others in the fine arts, and by Paul Dessau, Hanns Eisler, Jean Kurt Forest, Günter Kochan, Ernst Hermann Meyer and others in the realm of musical composition. The DEFA film company had made an important contribution to the emergence of a socialist consciousness through several feature films and, especially, a number of major documentary films dealing with Nazi and war crimes and with the appearance of militarism and revanchism in the FRG.

The campaign for socialist team work provided much impetus in the way of encouraging closer ties between art and the people. Amateur art groups, groups of worker-authors and other forms of creative cultural activity by the working people began more and more to leave their imprint on the country's intellectual and cultural life. The workers' festivals, held since 1959 and sponsored by the FDGB, were an expression of the new stage attained in co-

operation between professional and amateur artists and in working people's participation in creative cultural processes.

Just as in the political and economic fields, manifold relations with the USSR and other socialist countries were also coming into being in the fields of science, technology and culture. People were deeply moved by masterpieces of the Soviet cinema such as *The Cranes are Flying* and by outstanding Soviet literary works such as the story *The Fate of a Man* by Mikhail Sholokhov and the novel *The Living and the Dead* by Konstantin Simonov. The first joint German-Soviet film was made, which described how Dresden's art treasures were salvaged by members of the Red Army. To a growing extent, cultural exchanges helped bring the peoples of the friendly socialist countries closer together, enabling them to get to know each other's great historic and cultural traditions. They enriched the GDR's intellectual and cultural life.

With the fulfilment of essential tasks of the socialist cultural revolution, Marxism-Leninism—the scientific world view of the working class—became the dominant ideology in the GDR. Working people's educational standards increased. From the ranks of the working class and the peasantry there emerged a new intelligentsia who, together with intellectuals of bourgeois origins, placed their knowledge and skill at the service of socialist construction. A socialist national culture began to evolve in the GDR, which was to preserve and enrich the progressive heritage of the past.

#### 14. The socialist transformation of agriculture

Thanks to the example set by the most advanced LPGs and to persistent persuasion it was possible, over a prolonged period, to win over the majority of private farmers for cooperative work. State aid for the LPGs and the "Industrial workers to the countryside" campaign, resulting in numerous workers assuming senior positions in the

cooperatives, largely helped to overcome signs of stagnation in the socialist transformation of agriculture. While the number of LPGs formed in the period 1955-57 was 544, approximately 3,000 were set up in 1958. Most of the new members were peasant farmers, many of them owners of medium-sized farms.

By early 1960 developments had reached a stage enabling the SED to formulate the task of persuading the remaining private farmers to join cooperatives. It initiated the formation of brigades and working groups consisting of members of all political parties and mass organizations. At numerous meetings and in private conversations frequently involving fierce arguments, they explained to the farmers the socialist future of the GDR and the advantages of cooperative work.

Despite a virulent propaganda campaign by the imperialist media, which predicted widespread famine and the total collapse of our agriculture, it proved possible further to reduce persisting doubts and reservations among private farmers, notably those with large and medium-sized holdings.

Franz Radicke, then first secretary of the SED district committee at Pritzwalk, wrote in his reminiscences: "More and more farmers were joining the LPGs ... All this prompted us to call a meeting of party activists on 9 March 1960 and to dispatch them to the villages for discussions aimed at persuading others to join as well. The local chairmen of the Democratic Bloc parties were advised of our decision and took part in the discussions ...

"The talks with the farmers who were still reluctant required a good dose of patience and perseverance ... It was not uncommon for us to find doors and farmsteads closed or to have dogs let loose upon us. Frequently, the conversations took place over a fence or at the window sill ... Even so we were making progress ... By 13 March 1960, a Sunday, Pritzwalk district had gone fully cooperative. There were 129 LPGs, including 72 of the first type."<sup>28</sup>

As of April 1960, virtually all farmers in the GDR had

entered agricultural production cooperatives. Eilenburg and Rostock were, respectively, the first district and the first county to go entirely cooperative.

Out of 961,500 LPG members recorded in 1960 a majority, i. e. 64 per cent, had owned small or medium-sized farms, 17 per cent had been agricultural workers, five per cent each industrial workers and big farmers, and the rest craftsmen, gardeners and salaried employees. Forty-five per cent were women who had often been strongly in favour of joining an LPG because for them work on a private farm had been particularly toilsome. The majority of the 19,345 LPGs existing in the country were of the first type, while those of the third type which predominated in the northern parts of the GDR accounted for the bulk of the farming area. The LPGs were farming about 85 per cent of the country's arable land.

The implementation of socialist relations of production in agriculture was one of the most important results of the socialist revolution in the GDR. The possibility of capitalist conditions being restored on the basis of simple commodity production was removed, and the foundations were laid for gradually eliminating all essential distinctions between town and country. There emerged the class of cooperative farmers, the main ally of the working class in a socialist society.

The full socialist transformation of agriculture in the GDR, an industrially developed country in which farming had already been practised on intensive lines under capitalism, occurred approximately at the same time as in Albania, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Korea, Romania and Hungary. It reconfirmed the universal validity of Lenin's cooperative plan which the SED creatively applied to the conditions obtaining in the GDR. The victory of the cooperative movement was the consummation of the struggle for emancipation which the peasants had been waging for centuries. At the same time, it underlined the point that the definitive emancipation of the peasantry is possible only under the leadership of the working class and on the basis of its political power.

A major part in the victory of socialism in the countryside was played by the pioneers of the cooperative movement such as the Communists Walter Bosse, Fritz Dallmann, Bernhard Grünert, Rudolf Penzel, August Rauer, Frieda Sternberg and Ernst Wulf, CDU member August Hillebrand, DBD member Gustav Niks, and others.

After the 5th SED Congress a breakthrough was also achieved regarding the socialist transformation of the craft sector and the private sector of industry. The number of craft production cooperatives (PGH) doubled from 1958 to 1960, their contribution to the total output of the craft sector attaining over one third. During the same period the number of firms with state participation tripled. They accounted for 6.5 per cent of the country's industrial output, the private sector's share still being nine per cent. By 1960 over 20,000 private retail traders had signed commission agreements.

The political parties allied with the SED—the CDU, DBD, LDPD and NDPD—made an important contribution to drawing small commodity producers and entrepreneurs into the socialist construction effort. Many local branches of the DBD joined cooperatives *en bloc*. Members of the CDU, LDPD and NDPD often led the way in the establishment of PGHs or agreed to state participation in their private firms. These parties submitted many valuable suggestions such as the proposal made by the CDU to make it possible for managers of enterprises with state participation to attend special courses in economics.

In the struggle for the victory of socialist production relations the petty bourgeois-democratic parties underwent a further development. Their cooperation with the SED became closer. The tasks of socialist construction affecting society at large were assuming growing significance in their activities.



### 15. The security measures of 13 August 1961

Significant changes in the international balance of forces became apparent at the end of the fifties. In most of the countries which had taken the socialist path after the Second World War important tasks connected with the transition period from capitalism to socialism were carried out. With the victory of the revolution in Cuba the Western Hemisphere's first socialist state came into being. The socialist countries deepened their multilateral and bilateral cooperation. Deliberations took place regularly between the party and state leaderships and developed into the highest form of pooling experience and coordinating work on shared tasks. Deliberations of the parties of the world communist movement which took place in Moscow in 1957 and 1960 decided upon a joint general line in the struggle against imperialism and for the further advance of socialism.

The national liberation movement of the peoples of the world also advanced on a scale unknown hitherto. 1960 was the "Year of Africa". After the liquidation of the old colonial empires in Asia was almost complete, Africa in that year saw the emergence of numerous new states. This resulted in the USA losing its "automatic majority" at the UN. This opened up more favourable perspectives for work in this world organization than had been the case hitherto.

Together with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries the GDR supported the struggle of the national liberation movement. Thanks to its consistent peace policy it acquired increasing prestige among the peoples of the colonially oppressed countries and the newly emerging nations. In 1959 the GDR made an agreement with the United Arab Republic on the setting up of a consulate-general. This was followed by similar agreements in 1960 with Burma and Indonesia.

However, imperialism did not surrender any of its positions voluntarily. It tried to maintain its domination,

either by means of brutal force as in the case of Cuba or the peoples of the Congo, or by neocolonialist methods. After its major defeats in Asia, Africa and Central America it again turned with renewed concentration to Europe.

The ruling circles of the Federal Republic of Germany, which had become the most important allies of the USA, behaved in a particularly aggressive manner. Now as before they maintained their aim of annexing the GDR and of expanding imperialist rule to the East. Based on their significant economic potential and their increasing influence in NATO they meant to achieve this aim within a short time.

The government of the FRG broke off its relations with Yugoslavia in 1957 and with Cuba in 1960 because these countries had exchanged diplomatic missions with the GDR. It rejected the GDR's proposal to set up a German confederation as it did the Soviet Union's proposals in 1958 and 1959 to give West Berlin the status of a demilitarized free city and to prepare a German peace treaty and exerted influence on its NATO partners to react in a similarly negative manner. At the same time influential CDU/CSU politicians made hectic efforts to arm the Bundeswehr with nuclear weapons.

The SPD's right-wing leaders made possible and supported this adventurist and dangerous policy. After they had pressed through the Godesberg Programme in 1959—the basis for the integration of social democracy into the existing imperialist state—they also agreed in principle to the foreign and military policy of the CDU/CSU in June 1960.

In order to prepare for "D-Day", the day the workers' and farmers' state was meant to be overthrown, the FRG's monopolies and government escalated the economic war against the GDR. In the autumn of 1960 the FRG government terminated the existing trade agreements with the GDR and called upon other states to boycott the Leipzig Fair. Although they had to withdraw the notice of termination in December and the boycott calls were shown to be ineffective, difficult problems resulted for the GDR's

economy which was dependent on vital supplies from the FRG. Changes had to be made in plans and in production because the possibility of a further trade embargo could not be excluded. The Soviet Union and other CMEA countries delivered vital materials and foodstuffs in excess of the quantities agreed upon. In an effort to make the economy independent of harassment GDR workers, technologists and scientists turned out—often at short notice—products which had hitherto been imported from the FRG.

The economic measures were accompanied by an anticommunist campaign on the part of numerous mass media in the FRG and West Berlin which were very similar even in their details to the Nazi propaganda against Czechoslovakia and Poland immediately before these countries were attacked in 1938 and 1939. Its aim was to spread alarm and despondency among the GDR population and to create the impression for the benefit of world public opinion that a "popular uprising" was at hand in the GDR which the 'West' had to support by all means at its disposal. Thus a newspaper close to the CDU put forward the demand that "the free world must be in a position to apply cold war measures as well as psychological warfare and shooting war ... Among them should be not only conventional forces and armaments but also subversion, the encouraging of internal resistance, underground work, the breaking down of law and order, sabotage, disrupting transport and the economy, insubordination, rebellion and revolution."<sup>28</sup>

With the openly announced intention of "bleeding the GDR white" the luring westward of GDR citizens, above all specialists and young people, was greatly intensified and the network of criminal organizations promoted by the state for this type of trade in human beings was greatly expanded. By using the open GDR frontier West Berlin played the role of a human conduit.

All this was connected with the immediate preparation of military aggression against the GDR. In the course of staff exercises and manoeuvres held in 1960/61 the

Bundeswehr tried out variants of the "Blitzkrieg strategy" and of "limited war" against the GDR and other socialist states. Some politicians and commentators hinted that the Bundeswehr might be in a position where they would resolve the "internal German conflict" which would most probably be set off by clashes on West Berlin's borders by way of a "local police action". Threatening the use of the USA's nuclear weapons potential, thus the speculation, would deter the Soviet Union from intervening.

In July 1961 the research advisory council for questions connected with the reunification of Germany with its office in Bonn submitted a comprehensive plan for D-day. This provided for the incorporation of the GDR into the FRG, the dividing up of the nationally owned enterprises and banks among the FRG's monopolies, and the dissolution of the cooperative farms and the distribution of their land and other assets primarily among the Junkers and large landowners. During the second half of July Franz Josef Strauss, the Defence Minister of the FRG and head of the Bundeswehr and then as today one of the most militant imperialist politicians, visited the USA in order to obtain assurances of support. At the beginning of August the NATO units stationed in Western Europe were put on an emergency footing.

The allied socialist states could not stand idly by in the face of this development, involving as it did the greatest possible dangers to peace. The experience of history had taught that the aggressor must be halted in his tracks before setting off an active aggression. As a result the socialist armies united in the Warsaw Treaty Organization increased their defence readiness. It was in the first place necessary to reduce the tensions emanating from West Berlin and to avert the danger of a local conflict on West Berlin's borders leading to a military confrontation with unforeseeable consequences.

The GDR had kept its border with West Berlin open for years although this had resulted in considerable aggravation as far as socialist construction was concerned. It had done this in order not to complicate matters with the FRG

and West Berlin. This policy of understanding in line with the interests of the population of the GDR, the FRG and West Berlin did not, however, result in a positive response either from the FRG's government or the Social Democrat-controlled West Berlin Senate. It had, on the contrary, been answered by a permanent cold war directed against the workers' and farmers' state. In the summer of 1961 the tensions resulting from this had reached such proportions that decisive measures for the securing of peace and for the protection of socialism had become imperative.

The First Secretaries of the communist and workers' parties of the Warsaw Treaty states conferred in Moscow from 3 to 5 August 1961 on the measures proposed by the GDR and the USSR. It was recommended to the People's Chamber, the government and all working people of the GDR that they "make arrangements on the border with West Berlin of a nature reliably barring subversive activities against the countries of the socialist camp and to assure a reliable guard and effective control around the entire area of West Berlin, including its frontier with democratic Berlin".<sup>30</sup> On 11 August the People's Chamber, on the proposal of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), instructed the Council of Ministers to take all necessary steps in this matter.

During the night from 12 to 13 August 1961 the measures decided upon were carried out with a speed and precision that took the imperialist secret services completely by surprise. Units of the National People's Army, the workers' militia, the frontier police and the People's Police took over the military protection of the GDR's state frontiers in a coordinated action with the units of the Soviet Army stationed in the GDR. Together with workers they strengthened the frontier with West Berlin, the installations being extended during the months which followed. West Berlin as the focal point of a possible war was brought under control and the GDR's state frontiers, including its borders with West Berlin, was reliably safeguarded.

The security measures of 13 August 1961 were a joint political action of the Warsaw Treaty states which restrained the aggressive imperialist forces in the FRG and in other NATO countries and saved peace in Europe. They curtailed the capacity of FRG imperialism to cause disruption and inflicted a grave defeat on it. Its strategy, i. e. to annex the GDR by means of a "frontal attack" suffered a complete débâcle. As has been admitted even by bourgeois politicians and historians, 13 August 1961 was the beginning of the end of the Adenauer era in the FRG. This day, as a bourgeois newspaper noted shortly thereafter, had made obvious the fact that the FRG government's policy of "reunification with the help of arms and strength had failed".<sup>30</sup>

The united and decisive action of the Warsaw Treaty states had been evidence of the real balance of forces and the firm ensconcement of the GDR in the socialist community of states and its inviolability as a sovereign socialist state. Nowadays it is being recognized even by people who do not sympathize with the Communists that 13 August 1961 was a decisive step on the road from cold war to international détente.



Demonstrators on their way to August Bebel Platz, 11 October 1949



Wilhelm Pieck is elected President of the GDR, 11 October 1949



Demonstration in Berlin, 11 October 1949  
Gen. Vasili Chulkov, Chairman of the Soviet Control Commission in Germany, receives the delegation of the GDR Government headed by Prime Minister, Otto Grotewohl, 11 November 1949



Constitution of the National Council of the National Front on 3 February 1950. From l. to r.: Ernst Goldenbaum, DBD; Walter Ulbricht, SED; Elli Schmidt, DFD; and Erich Honecker, FOJ



A conference held in 1950 to promote labour productivity  
Harvest festival at Stechau, Saxony



FDJ volunteers salvaging scrap in Luckenwalde district, July 1950



May 1950  
A new school year begins



President Wilhelm Pieck is briefed on the progress of the reconstruction of Berlin's State Opera, December 1954



Soviet State Concerns are handed over to the GDR government  
Friendship visit from Krivoi Rog at the Otto Brosowski mine,  
November 1959





The Hohenwarte II pump storage station under construction



Heinrich Mauersberger and the first Malimo machine he designed  
Delegates from consumer goods factories are received by Wilhelm Pieck, November 1953. Seen on the far left is Luise Ermisch



A youth team who took part in a productivity campaign in 1955



The Lübbenau power station

A workers' militia unit from Klängenberg power station,  
October 1956



On 18 January 1956 the People's Chamber adopted the law establishing the National People's Army. A tank crew is seen here in conversation with FDJ members

The 16th International Peace Bicycle Race from Prague to Berlin via Warsaw, 1963



The Nikolai Mamai youth team from the Bitterfeld electrochemical plant, September 1959

A rally against fascism and war on Berlin's August Bebel Platz, September 1960



Workers' militiamen securing the GDR's state border on the Brandenburg Gate, August 1961

### III.

On the road  
to an advanced socialist  
society

1961—1970

### 1. The altered balance of forces

The start of the sixties made it clear that the international balance of forces had altered in favour of socialism. The socialist world system entered a new phase of development. In the Soviet Union socialism had triumphed once and for all. The 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in October 1961 set the task of creating the preconditions for communism through the further development of socialist society. The first flight into the universe in human history by Yuri Gagarin on 12 April 1961 was convincing proof of the Soviet Union's potential.

The peoples of most of the socialist countries had solved the most important tasks of the transition period from capitalism to socialism. The socio-economic structure and the political system had assumed a socialist character. In its essentials the exploitation of man by man had been eliminated. The working class had become the ruling class and decided the course of further development in alliance with the class of cooperative farmers and the strata of the socialist intelligentsia. Most of the socialist countries had developed into modern industrial and agricultural countries. The share of the CMEA countries in world industrial production had increased from 18 per cent in 1950 to nearly 30 per cent at the beginning of the sixties. As a result of the anti-imperialist people's revolution in Cuba, which quickly turned into a socialist revolution, the socialist world system expanded further.

In the capitalist countries the working-class movement

underwent a new upswing. An increasing number of workers and other democratic forces in strikes and political actions fought against exploitation and oppression as well as against the rule of monopoly capital and for democratic rights and freedoms. In countries with fascist dictatorships too, such as Spain and Portugal, the progressive forces strengthened their efforts in the struggle for an anti-monopolist democracy. The USA saw the development of the civil rights movement and the struggle against racial discrimination.

The national revolutionary movement, too, attained a new stage. In 1962 the people of Algeria obtained their national sovereignty after a long and hard struggle. Since the end of the Second World War 40 African and Asian countries had freed themselves from colonial oppression. Capitalism's classical colonial system had collapsed.

All these presented favourable international conditions for the further development of the GDR. The GDR enjoyed the support of the socialist community, above all of the Soviet Union, as well as that of many anti-imperialist forces. This contributed to the strengthening of its international position at the beginning of the sixties and to stabilizing the foundations of socialism within the country.

The beginning of the sixties also witnessed a change in the balance of forces and in the relations between the capitalist countries. The USA lost its unlimited supremacy in the capitalist world. The western European countries began to mould themselves into a relatively independent power group in which the FRG aimed to achieve hegemony. Japan made efforts to dislodge the FRG from second place among the economies of the capitalist part of the world. Some countries, among them France, endeavoured to stress more strongly their sovereignty and national independence. This was a new group of forces in the capitalist world in comparison to the post-war years, which resulted from the inevitably unequal economic and political development of capitalism.

Connected with this trend, but particularly under the

influence of the development of socialism, the debate was intensified within the imperialist camp on the strategy to be used vis-à-vis socialism. After the "roll-back" strategy had failed it was particularly in the USA that new strategic concepts were worked out. The aim was now as before the destruction of socialism but some methods were meant to be changed and a longer term was thought to be necessary to achieve this aim. In this manner imperialism sought to adjust itself to the changed balance of forces. The new strategic concepts provided for a more flexible application of political, economic, ideological, diplomatic and military means in the struggle against socialism, the revolutionary workers' movement and the national liberation movements. Above all the socialist world system was to be "softened up" by more flexible methods and then split in order to open the way to a capitalist restoration.

Working out the "strategy of adaptation" required a fairly long period of time. Influential imperialist forces, particularly in the FRG, were initially not prepared to take account of the changed international political situation. The government of the FRG also confirmed its revanchist and counter-revolutionary aims vis-à-vis the GDR after the obvious fiasco its policy has suffered in August 1961. Not only bourgeois but also right-wing Social Democratic politicians and publications entreated the Western powers to intervene militarily and enforce the removal of the "wall". Attacks and provocations were launched against the GDR's state frontiers. Peter Göring and Reinhold Huhn, two members of the frontier force were murdered.

These hostile acts caused the GDR's government to reinforce the frontier installations. The People's Chamber adopted the Defence Act in September 1961 and the Military Service Act in January 1962, the latter providing for compulsory national service. The National People's Army's arms and equipment were improved. As a result of a campaign launched by the Free German Youth (FDJ) almost 300,000 young people declared their readiness to

serve in the armed forces. The Soviet Union resolutely condemned the imperialist provocations and promised the GDR support of every kind in defending its sovereignty. During the summer of 1962 the situation on the frontier between the capital of the GDR and West Berlin stabilized.

The arrangements the GDR had made on the frontier in the exercise of its sovereign rights assured the human rights of the citizens, their personal property and their freedom. It safeguarded them from the grip of imperialism which had caused them losses for years, which had caused them to be discriminated internationally for years and which had tried to subject them to capitalist exploitation again.

The working class and the other working people made use of the new and favourable national and international conditions for the strengthening and further construction of socialism. To begin with it was necessary to overcome disproportions in the national economy, which had come about as a result of imperialist activities during the time the frontier was still open. The losses the GDR sustained during this period were estimated by an FRG economist at 120,000 million marks. This corresponds approximately to the sum invested in GDR industry during the fifties. The increase in labour productivity in 1961 had fallen far short of the target. On the other hand the population had at its disposal extraordinarily large amounts of money which were not matched by an adequate supply of goods. There were also major disproportions between accumulation and consumption.

In September 1961 employees of the nationally-owned Elektrokohle at Berlin started a campaign to produce more for the same amount of money. This example was followed by the workers at many other factories. By increasing labour productivity and production while keeping wage levels largely unchanged they made a contribution to overcoming economic difficulties.

The slogan to produce more for the same wages was only a temporary necessity in order to stabilize the

economy and to reduce existing disproportions. It was soon found possible by making better use of the economic laws of socialism and scientific and technical progress to increase the productivity and technical progress to increase the productivity of labour and to put the principle of pay according to performance into effect.

The campaign was continued in 1962 on the initiative of the workforce of the nationally-owned "8 May" lathe factory at Karl Marx Stadt. The slogan used called on the workers to think carefully, calculate in economic terms, make technical improvements and work honestly. It developed into a mass movement which united the multifarious initiatives of the working people for the strengthening of the GDR both in the economic and political sphere and for the safeguarding of peace. The campaign turned out to be the start of an upsurge in the economic development of the GDR.

The months after the state frontiers had been secured were a period of increased ideological debate and of political clarification in the GDR. The overwhelming majority of the working people recognized, as a result of the patient ideological work of the SED and the National Front, that the security measures of August 1961 were in line with their interests in safeguarding peace and their socialist achievements. More clearly than before many citizens became aware of the limits of the power of imperialism on the one hand and of the strength and prospects of socialism on the other. Many of those who had hitherto not committed themselves began to appreciate that socialism in the GDR could no longer be reversed. But there were also a number of people, particularly among the approximately 100,000 border crossers who had worked in West Berlin when the frontier had still been open, who had difficulties in appreciating the political situation.

The SED started a discussion in the National Front on the relationship of socialism, imperialism and the national question in the history of the German people and during the present period. The numerous discussions which

resulted made it clear to many working people that socialism and imperialism were irreconcilable and strengthened their conviction as far as the historical inevitability of the GDR's socialist future at the side of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries was concerned.

## 2. The results of the transition period

As in most of the other socialist countries, the problems arising out of the period of transition from capitalism to socialism had been largely solved by the beginning of the sixties. The political organization of socialism had, in its essentials, been created. Socialist state power, the main instrument of the working class in building socialism, successfully exercised all the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The SED, with its membership of 1.8 million, had proved itself as Marxist-Leninist party and as the leading force in society. The cooperation of the SED with the mass organizations and the allied democratic parties had also withstood all tests during periods of intensified class struggle. The Confederation of Free German Trade Unions (FDGB), with its 7 million members, occupied an important position in society. It primarily implemented socialist democracy in the sphere of material production. The CDU, DBD, LDPD and NDPD—the parties allied to the SED—had made an active contribution to constructing the foundations of socialism and in so doing had developed further politically, organizationally and ideologically.

Notwithstanding the imperialist economic war, the workers and other working people had scored major successes in building a socialist economy. The national income had increased from 22,000 million Marks in 1949 to 74,000 million Marks in 1962. The volume of industrial production during this period had almost quadrupled. The GDR economy now had at its disposal an efficient metallurgical base. Mechanical engineering, the chemical industry and the electrical engineering industry had been

developed while the production of energy had been expanded considerably. Shipbuilding had been newly developed and with it a merchant navy. At the end of the fifties the construction of new branches of industry had commenced, among them electronics and petrochemical enterprises.

The socio-economic structure of society had undergone considerable changes. In 1962 the various forms of property had the following shares in the social product: socialist nationally-owned property 72.2 per cent, socialist cooperative property 13.3 per cent, enterprises with government participation and firms with commission agreements 6.6 per cent, and private enterprises 7.9 per cent.

Class relations corresponded to the socio-economic structure. Of those employed in the national economy 76.3 per cent were workers and office employees and 12 per cent were cooperative farmers. The intelligentsia's share amounted to 7 per cent. Another 1.8 per cent were members of craftsmen's cooperatives and 2 per cent were private craftsmen, while commission and private retailers amounted to 0.7 per cent of those engaged in economic pursuits. In 1962 there were still more than 6,000 enterprises with state participation and 5,500 smaller and medium-sized private firms employing about half a million workers.

The working class had greatly increased in size. The number of workers and office employees increased from 4.8 million in 1949 to 6.2 million in 1961. There was a particularly large rise in the number of those working in major socialist industries. At the same time there had been significant changes in the structure of the working class. Whereas in 1950 the workers in light industry were by far the largest grouping in the working class, this place had been occupied by those working in the metal-processing industry by the beginning of the sixties. This was the branch of industry which was of special significance for scientific and technological progress and for the development of the national economy as a whole.

There were approximately a million cooperative farmers who had begun to stabilize themselves as a class. With the development of the socialist intelligentsia this social stratum had also greatly increased in numbers. Whereas in 1946 there were about 250,000 members of the intelligentsia, their number had increased to about 530,000 by the early sixties.

The new class structure provided the objective preconditions for the development of the political and moral unity of the people and for bringing the working classes and other strata closer together. Marxism-Leninism had become the ruling ideology on the basis of the new socio-economic relations, the essentially socialist class structure and the political power of the working class. A socialist German national culture developed. The character of its state and social order and socialist international relations had made the GDR into a firm component of the socialist community of states. All these were at the same time the socio-political foundations for the socialist German nation.

In this manner the working class and the other working people had brought about the biggest change in the history of the German people under the leadership of the SED during the course of the transition period from capitalism to socialism. For more than 2,000 years the class struggle had been the mainspring of history. Historical progress had been based on antagonism and was accompanied by numerous wars, crises and other catastrophes. From now onwards new driving forces prevailed within socialist society, in the first place the constant struggle for the coordination of interests between all social classes and strata, between the individual, the family, work collective, enterprise, the local community and society as a whole. As far as the antagonism between socialism and imperialism was concerned the class struggle continued to be of decisive importance.

The transition from capitalism to socialism proceeded in an integrated and continuous revolutionary process



which had started with the antifascist-democratic changes and which had been continued systematically with the erection of the workers' and farmers' state and the socialist revolution. It was part of the world revolutionary process, particularly of the development and strengthening of the socialist world system. The successful transition from capitalism to socialism in the GDR confirmed the general validity of the basic experiences of the Soviet Union. At the same time it bore witness to the fact that the SED was able to apply creatively Marxism-Leninism and the experience of the CPSU as well as of other communist and workers parties.

### 3. The 6th Congress of the SED

The 6th Congress of the SED took place in January 1963. It had the responsibility of analysing to what extent the historic mission of the working class had been implemented and had to work out the social policy for the country's future development. The congress was of the opinion that the socialist relations of production had triumphed in the GDR and that the foundations of socialism had been erected in their essentials and that goals had been achieved for which the revolutionary German working class had fought for more than a century but that the construction of socialism had by no means been completed. This estimate was the basis for working out the strategy for the further development of society. History has proved that it is not possible to proceed to the building of communism immediately after the victory of the socialist revolution. The development of society having reached the level it had, it could not however be only a question of strengthening the foundations of socialism and of carrying out fully the tasks arising out of the period of transition. It was rather a question of linking these with a continuing strategic aim.

The SED proceeded from the assumption that the

opportunities, advantages and driving force of socialism were not exhausted after the victory of the socialist revolution, but that it was only then that they unfold themselves and become effective. For this too—and history has shown this since—a longish period of time is required.

The 6th Party Congress declared the comprehensive construction of socialism as the strategic task of the SED. The programme adopted by the party and presented by Walter Ulbricht states:

"The interests of the people and the needs of the working people are an important driving force and do not allow any resting on one's laurels. They demand socialism in its entirety."<sup>32</sup> The Party Congress, basing itself on this, set out the aims for the subsequent period for all important spheres of society.

The main task in the economic field was the development of the socialist national economy within the framework of the economies of the CMEA countries. Planned use was to be made of the economic laws of socialism and production and labour productivity was to be increased rapidly on the basis of a high level of science and technology. The Congress developed principles of a new economic system of managing and planning the national economy. Socialist state power was assigned the task of improving its performance in respect of managing the economy and its cultural and educational activities, of developing socialist democracy and of reliably protecting the achievements of the working people in alliance with the USSR and the other Warsaw Treaty states. The Party Congress decided to continue the socialist revolution in the sphere of ideology and of culture, and above all to strengthen the socialist consciousness of all working people and to reach a high level of education and culture befitting a socialist society.

The Party Programme described it as a task of first-rate importance that the GDR make its contribution to strengthening and developing the socialist world system and to deepening friendship and cooperation with the CPSU, the advance guard of the communist world move-

ment, and with the Soviet Union. The Programme defined the two phases of communist society, socialism and communism. The SED voiced its support for the definition of communism in the programme of the CPSU and declared it as its aim to tackle the construction of communism after the comprehensive building of socialism in the GDR.

As far as its foreign policy vis-à-vis the capitalist countries was concerned, the SED based itself on the fact that the most essential issue was the securing of a durable peace. In this the SED let itself be guided by the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence among states with opposing social orders.

The 6th Congress also adopted a policy on the national question. It declared that the GDR would complete the construction of socialism in alliance with the Soviet Union and would then go over to the building of communism irrespective of social developments in the FRG and the relations between the two German states. The principle of peaceful coexistence would also have to be applied to the relations between the GDR and the FRG and at least a minimum of correct relations and agreements between the two states and between the GDR and West Berlin would have to be established. The SED was of the opinion that a confederation, based on the sovereignty and equal rights of both states and of a free city of West Berlin could be a form of peaceful coexistence which would not create a state power standing above either of them. Provided that the working class in the FRG were to succeed in taking over the leadership in state and society too, the SED still thought it possible that the division of Germany, brought about by imperialism, could be overcome after a fairly long process of historical development.

As subsequent developments have shown, the divergence between the GDR and the FRG became ever greater and, as a result of the reactionary policy of the FRG's ruling circles, the idea of a confederation also turned out to be still-born. It was only the policy of peaceful coexistence in line with international law between the GDR

and the FRG as well as with West Berlin, elaborated and practiced by the SED since the middle fifties which proved to be practical in the light of the development of history.

The 6th Congress also adopted a new party constitution which was presented by Erich Honecker. It guided the members in respect of the new responsibilities they faced in the comprehensive building of socialism. The Central Committee elected a Politbureau consisting of Friedrich Ebert, Paul Fröhlich, Otto Grotewohl, Kurt Hager, Erich Honecker, Bruno Leuschner, Hermann Matern, Erich Mückenberger, Alfred Neumann, Albert Norden, Willi Stoph, Walter Ulbricht, Paul Verner and Herbert Warnke. Erich Apel, Hermann Axen, Georg Ewald, Gerhard Grüneberg, Werner Jarowinsky, Günter Mittag, Margarete Müller and Horst Sindermann were elected alternate members, while Walter Ulbricht was chosen as First Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED.

Summarizing, one can say about the history of the GDR at the beginning of the sixties that the new stage in the development of the socialist world system was the most important international precondition for the further construction of socialism in the GDR. The security measures for the protection of the GDR's state frontiers with West Berlin and the FRG created favourable external conditions. The victory of the socialist relations of production was the decisive internal break which characterized the new stage of historical development. The 6th Congress of the SED saw the beginning of the elaboration of the strategy of developing an advanced socialist society.

#### **4. New demands on the development of the socialist economy**

An economic conference convened by the SED Central Committee and the Council of Ministers of the GDR took place in June 1963. On the basis of the decisions of the 6th Congress it discussed directives on the introduction of the new economic system of planning and manage-

ment in the national economy. The principles of this economic system had been prepared and tested by working groups and experiments in the economic sphere. The experiences of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries had also been evaluated. Bourgeois economists and historians maintain that the economic reforms undertaken during this period in the socialist countries had been a "loan" from the capitalist market economy which had become necessary because the economic policy carried out hitherto had allegedly been a failure. In fact however, the improvement of planning and management is a constant task facing socialist economic policy. At the beginning of the sixties this was a particularly urgent matter because the volume of production had risen enormously since the transition period and fixed assets had increased greatly. Factors relevant to economic growth such as replacement investments, education and intensification in general became objective necessities for continued economic growth. New demands arose out of closer economic, scientific, and technological cooperation with the USSR and the other CMEA countries. The opportunities presenting themselves as a result of the scientific and technological revolution had to be utilized to an increasing extent in order to exhaust the entire potential of the advantages of socialism. The economic competition between capitalism and socialism increasingly became a competition in the economic, scientific and technological spheres. In the first place, however, the interests of the working class and the other working people demanded a national economy able to perform more effectively.

The measures introduced were meant to improve the state's management of the economy and to take into consideration on a more comprehensive scale the law of value as well as such categories as wages, prices, interest, credit, costs and profits. The enterprises were given additional responsibility with regard to entire process of reproduction. In 1964 80 VVBs (associations of nationally owned industrial enterprises) started to work on the basis

of economic accountancy and to develop into leading bodies in their branches of industry. In order to promote a material interest decisions were taken on the setting up of a bonus fund and its use, as well as on the introduction of shift bonuses and on additional leave based on performance.

As a result of the activities of the state and of the enterprises in the economic sphere greater account was taken of the economic laws of socialism and the qualitative factors of economic growth were increasingly allowed to come into their own. Planning for society as a whole was more closely tied to the economic units and the thinking of the working people in economic categories was promoted. Practical experience however showed that not all measures came up to expectations and that new experience had constantly to be accumulated.

There were major structural changes in the GDR's industry simultaneously with the improvements in management and planning. Those branches of industry received special attention which helped to promote scientific and technical progress and for which favourable conditions existed in the GDR. This applied to the chemical industry, particularly its petrochemical branch, the building of machines for the plastics and elastomere industries, electrical engineering and electronics, measurement and process control engineering as well as the precision mechanics and optical industries. As a result in the subsequent period the technological standard of manufacturing processes and products was raised in important branches of industry. At the same time it was shown that the development of an industrial structure in line with the requirements of an advanced socialist society was a complicated and long-term process. Investment funds were limited and not everything could be tackled at the same time. It was necessary to continue promoting the national production of raw materials and fuels and this also required considerable funds. At the same time it was essential to coordinate the structural changes with the process of the international socialist division of labour

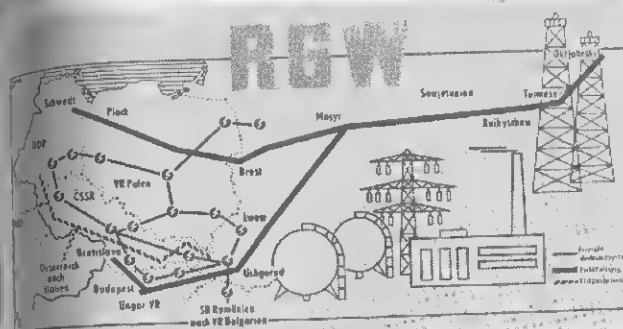
and this division in the CMEA had to be based on new, expanded foundations.

The meeting of the First Secretaries of the communist and workers' parties and heads of government of the CMEA countries held in June 1962 confirmed the "Basic Principles of the International Socialist Division of Labour". In practice this meant that a long-term programme had been decided on which was in line with the new stage of development of the socialist world system. It took into consideration that the effectiveness of the economic relations of the CMEA countries was of increasing importance to their cooperation. The basic principles involved particularly the coordination of the national economic plans as well as specialization and co-operation in production.

The CMEA countries set various multilateral organizations in which the GDR also participated. Thus the electricity supply grids of the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary were linked, the Friendship oil pipeline was completed, an international bank for economic co-operation was founded and a railway freight car pool set up. In 1964 organizations for cooperation in the manufacture of anti-friction bearings and in the field of ferrous metallurgy.

As a result of discussion between leading representatives of the GDR and the USSR which took place in Moscow in February 1962, trade and scientific and technological cooperation between the two countries increased considerably. The USSR granted the GDR considerable facilities for the purchase of commodities on credit. Economic relations with the other socialist countries, particularly with neighbouring Czechoslovakia and Poland, were expanded. All this, particularly the support from the Soviet Union, made an essential contribution to the consolidation of the GDR's national economy and made it possible to take in hand long-term tasks.

The decisions of the 6th Congress of the SED as well as of the 6th FDGB Congress which took place in November 1963 provided new impulses for socialist emulation.



Important joint ventures undertaken by the countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance: power grid, oil pipeline and gas pipeline

The struggle for scientific and technological progress began to occupy the centre of the stage of the emulation drive. Work in numerous plants was concentrated on carrying out the New Technology plan. Socialist research groups at the Schwedt petro-chemical plant and other enterprises undertook to reduce sharply the periods of time required for research and development. Numerous new research groups were founded. In enterprises in the chemical, electronics and machine-building industries in particular labour productivity was raised on the basis of new scientific and technological findings.

Another new feature was the start made with organizing emulation drives on a scale going beyond the confines of a single enterprise. The initiative for this was taken by the workers at the Stralsund shipyard which had organized the drive together with its supplying industry. The first of the new "complex" emulation drives promoted cooperation among various branches of industry and enterprises and yielded valuable experience. But the increasing complexity of production could not, in the first

place, be mastered by socialist emulation but required new forms of management and organization. The organization of groups of producers guided by VVBs or major socialist enterprises was one method of coordinating the production of factories turning out the same or similar products. Among them were private firms and firms with state participation.

The joint efforts of the working people and managements led to improved results. Thus labour productivity in comparison with the preceding year increased by 4 per cent in 1963, 7 per cent in 1964 and 6 per cent in 1965. The national income, which had increased by 1 per cent in both 1960 and 1961, increased by 1.5 per cent in 1962, 3.2 per cent in 1963, 4.8 per cent in 1964 and 4.4 per cent in 1965. The accumulation capacity of the national economy increased and this resulted in more favourable conditions for further economic growth.

#### **5. The Five-Year-Plan from 1966 to 1970**

The GDR had at its disposal in the middle sixties an efficient and stable national economy. It had been demonstrated after the state frontiers had been secured in August 1961 that the economy and society were able to develop better if imperialism was deprived of the possibility of directly interfering with socialist construction. People lived more securely, calmly and contentedly. The standard of living improved. As of April 1966 the 5-day week was introduced, at first every alternate week and later generally. From 1966 a start was made with the gradual introduction of a year-end bonus which was equivalent to between 70 and 100 per cent of a month's wages and which was paid for fulfilling the current year's plan. Interruptions in the process of reproduction in the national economy, which had come about during the period of the open frontier as a result of the activities of imperialism, were gradually overcome. Foreign trade,

too, showed a favourable balance again in 1965, after having been unfavourable for a number of years.

But there were still many problems to be solved. One of them consisted of the fact that the age structure of the population was steadily deteriorating. In 1966 there were 72.5 persons not of working age per 100 persons of working age. In 1939 the ratio had been 48.1 to 100, in 1955 56.4 to 100, and in 1960 63 to 100. During the second half of the sixties the GDR had the most unfavourable ratio in this respect in comparison to similar industrial countries. These were the results of the great depression of the thirties, the second world war and the mass emigration—directly and indirectly—of workers during the fifties.

The material and technological basis had developed well in spite of imperialist economic warfare against socialism. Many new and modern factories had come into being and had commenced production. At the same time however about half the plant and equipment were obsolete. Automation, one way of solving this problem, takes decades. In 1963 4.2 per cent of the workers were operating automated machines, in 1966 4.8 per cent and in 1970 6.6 per cent.

All these facts made it obvious that the transition from a predominantly extensive to an overwhelmingly intensive extended production and rationalization in a socialist manner were urgent necessities which the economic policy of the SED and government had to take heed of. A conference held by the Central Committee of the SED and the Council of Ministers of the GDR in June 1966 in Leipzig declared the complex socialist rationalization to constitute the main direction of economic policy. It was strongly emphasized that rationalization would take place in the interests and for the benefit of the working people. Subsequently numerous plants worked out rationalization concepts and the manufacture of additional rationalization equipment was started. The innovators had a major share in the implementation of rationalization plans. The best results submitted by young innovators

were made known primarily through the young innovators' exhibitions.

In May 1967 the People's Chamber adopted the 1966-70 Five-Year-Plan. During the first half of the sixties the damage caused by imperialism to the economy during the period of the open frontier had to be made good and the economy stabilized. During this period the economy had essentially been run on the basis of annual plans. The Five-Year-Plan now provided for a growth rate of 6 per cent for the economy's main indicators. During this plan period the requirements of the scientific and technological revolution could be taken into consideration better than in previous plans. The petro-chemical industry, electronics, the manufacture of scientific instruments and the production of modern machine tools were to be specially promoted. Provision was made for the continued improvement of the workers' living conditions and for rebuilding the centres of Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig and Karl Marx Stadt. The plan was notable for its much larger scale as compared to its predecessors. This applied particularly to intensifying economic cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other CMEA countries.

The 7th Congress of the SED in April 1967 was of the opinion that the conditions and necessity had now matured—in this new historical period—for the equal and proportional development of all fields of the life of society such as the political, economic, cultural, ideological, scientific, defence and other spheres. This had not yet been possible under the concrete historical conditions of the transition from capitalism to socialism. Now, however, the material and financial means had increased and the economic and social forces had grown stronger so that this task could be taken in hand. This perception became part of the theory and strategy for developing an advanced socialist society.

In order to make the production process more effective, nationally-owned combines were set up which operated on the basis of the state plan and of economic accountancy. Among the first were the cable combine of

Berlin-Oberspree, the Ruhla watch combine and the Rostock residential building combine. By the end of 1970 37 nationally-owned combines in industry had come into being. At the same time multifarious forms of cooperation on the part of independent industrial enterprises were developed in order to increase efficiency. Among the first of these cooperation associations were Wolpryla in the textile industry and Atlantik in shipbuilding. By virtue of the fact that small enterprises, among them privately-owned ones, were also drawn into this type of cooperation, they had the opportunity to participate in socialist rationalization. The process of concentration in industry and the introduction of cooperation had a generally favourable impact on economic development.

The tasks connected with socialist rationalization assumed increasingly greater importance in socialist emulation. The call by Gerhard Kast of the Funkwerk Berlin-Köpenick that "Our factory must no longer live at the expense of others" found a ready echo in numerous other collectives. They championed the more efficient use of plant and equipment, the economical use of materials, raw and auxiliary materials and improved work organization. Workers from various branches of the economy such as Margot Bätz, Bruno Gering, Kurt Kittler, Herbert Middelstädt, Gertrud Rudolph, Bernd Schröder, Karl Zaumseil and many others took the lead. For the first time ever factories linked by cooperation agreements organized joint emulation drives.

High water marks were the emulation drives on the 50th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution and on the 20th anniversary of the founding of the GDR. In 1969 more than 2.2 million workers participated in an emulation campaign for the award "Collective of Socialist Labour". To work, learn and live in a socialist manner had become a mass movement.

Thanks to the efforts of the workers, the cooperative farmers, the members of the intelligentsia and other working people, progress was recorded in all spheres of society in the effort to fulfil the 1966-70 Five-Year-Plan.

In addition to the Five-Year-Plan steps were taken as of 1967 to develop the leading branches of the national economy more quickly. In 1969 an additional 87 automated plants were completed. Admittedly this brought into being important additional capacity for the economy, particularly of consumer goods; at the same time, however, the scale of these projects exceeded the possibilities available then. Also the restoration or the rebuilding of more city centres than provided for in the Five-Year-Plan claimed additional funds and capacities. Thus some sectors of the economy fell behind in carrying out their plans and new disproportions came about which had an adverse effect on the continuous development of the economy.

#### **6. On the path to a modern socialist agriculture**

After the state frontiers had been secured and socialist relations of production had triumphed, it was possible for the economic laws of socialism to become increasingly effective in agriculture as a whole. But the change-over from individual to socialist cooperative production was connected with difficult problems whose solution required several years and which was only possible with the support of the working class and the socialist state. At the beginning of the sixties most of the cooperative members had no or very little experience of cooperation. Particularly in the newly-founded LPGs (cooperative farms) of Type I the land under cultivation continued to be split up. Unfavourable weather conditions, particularly in 1960 and 1961 caused agriculture a great many difficulties. Hostile elements tried to intimidate the cooperative farmers and to oppose the consolidation of the LPGs by means of arson and other acts of sabotage, not even shrinking from murder.

The SED delegated additional experienced workers and specialists for work in agriculture. Nationally-owned in-

dustrial enterprises, government departments and scientific institutes took over the sponsorship of newly-founded LPGs. On the proposal of the SED the LPGs received loans on favourable conditions, while the funds to be used for the purchase of technical equipment were increased and additional cadres for socialist agriculture were trained at universities and technical colleges. In February 1963 an Agricultural Council was set up under the aegis of the Council of Ministers chaired by Georg Ewald to help in the better management of socialist agriculture and similar bodies were established on a county and district basis. These consisted of approximately 20,000 cooperative farmers, workers employed on state farms, agricultural scientists and party and government officials. The People's Police protected socialist agriculture from criminals and diversionists and, together with the National People's Army, extended political, ideological and material assistance to the cooperative farmers.

Tractors and other agricultural machines were gradually handed over to the LPGs. Type III LPGs received theirs free of charge, whereas Type I cooperatives had to pay for them. At the conclusion of this action the most important means of production in agriculture, i. e. land and equipment, were in the hands of a single ownership. The MTS (Machine and Tractor Stations) had carried out their historical tasks and, after having handed over their equipment to the LPGs, carried on as RTS, i. e. repair workshops. The more than 50,000 tractor drivers and specialists who joined the LPGs when the MTS were turned into RTS strengthened the influence of the working class.

The technical equipment of socialist agriculture showed considerable improvement. The number of tractors rose from around 70,000 in 1960 to 124,000 in 1965 and that of combine harvesters from 6,000 to 15,000. The degree of mechanization of important operations in agriculture increased. Whereas in 1960 38 per cent of the whole sown area was harvested with large machines, this percentage had increased to 71 by 1965. As far as artificial fertilizers

were concerned the GDR already occupied a place near the top of the international scale.

Thanks to the efforts of the cooperative farmers and as a result of the support extended by the working class and the state the LPGs consolidated themselves economically and politically, and the major differences existing initially between the most advanced and the less developed LPGs were gradually overcome. The yields which had fallen in 1961 as far as most crops were concerned, rose slowly but steadily. In animal husbandry too, successes were recorded. More fat stock, milk and eggs were sold to the state.

The class of cooperative farmers consolidated itself during the bid to obtain improved results in cooperative farming. A growing number of cooperative farmers abandoned concepts and patterns of behaviour which had had their origins in the consciousness of small proprietors, and a socialist consciousness began to develop. Increasing numbers of women farmers were drawn into the work of the cooperatives on an equal basis. The educational level of cooperative farmers and their qualifications as well as their cultural needs were rising. Socialist emulation also developed in the LPGs. The emulation movement—whose aim it was to fulfil and exceed the state plans—which had emanated from the Albinshof, Krien and Krusenfelde LPGs in the spring of 1962—was in many LPGs directed towards improving collective work, intensifying the cultivation of crops and animal husbandry, applying increasingly the new equipment and implementing socialist management methods. To the extent to which socialist agriculture consolidated itself and the development of its material and technological basis progressed, the necessity matured of specializing agricultural production, of establishing relations of cooperation between LPGs and VEGs (state-owned farms), and of gradually introducing industrial-type methods of production. This was the method of improving supplies of agricultural products to the population and to industry in a planned fashion. It was only in this manner that the

innovations of agricultural science and of modern technology, such as the E 605 harvester-thresher, potato and beet combines and the Soviet-made K 700 tractor could be universally introduced and rationally used.

Since the middle sixties cooperative farms and state farms have been getting together on a voluntary basis in what are known as cooperative associations. They started bringing in the harvest together, purchased and used modern machines jointly, went in for specialization and carried out investments in partnership. Cooperation of many kinds also developed between LPGs, VEGs and food-processing plants and the distributive trade. Working people in state-owned and cooperative socialist enterprises in agriculture, industry and trade got together in new, socialist collectives. This was an expression of the dynamic development of production relations under socialism.

After the victory and consolidation of socialist production relations in the rural areas, the SED looked upon cooperation as the decisive stage on the road to a modern socialist agriculture. In so doing it applied the Leninist plan of cooperation and the relevant experience of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries creatively to the new conditions prevailing in the GDR. The SED opposed tendencies to speed up artificially the transition to cooperative work as well as a tendency towards stagnation on the part of some LPGs. It saw to it that the principles of voluntariness as well as of the independence of the LPGs in the development of cooperation were strictly observed.

It was the SEDs policy to stress cooperation primarily in the sphere of crops and grassland farming as the most favourable conditions existed for this. At the end of the sixties progressive LPGs commenced cultivating specific crops jointly and followed this up with the joint organization of their entire sown area. They created the first crop production cooperative associations (KAP). Valuable assistance in developing the material and technical basis of agriculture and the use of chemical fertilizers was ex-



tended by the district workshops looking after agricultural machinery and the agro-chemical centres. The first complex land improvement schemes, particularly those involving larger areas, were taken in hand.

At the same time the end of the sixties saw the setting up at Königs Wusterhausen, Ferdinandshof and some other places of the first industrial-type establishments catering for animal husbandry. They very soon achieved an exceptionally high productivity and provided much important experience for further concentration and specialization in agricultural production.

### **7. The development of the socialist state and its laws**

After the triumph of socialist production relations and the securing of the state frontiers, the chief task facing the socialist state was the further development of its function in the economic, cultural and educational spheres. New conditions for the further development of socialist democracy had come into being. At the same time the GDR's defence capacity had to be strengthened in view of imperialism's undiminished aggressiveness.

The Act on the Council of Ministers of April 1963 clearly defined the responsibilities and tasks of this body. It had to see to it that the economic laws of socialism were consistently applied to their full advantage and that scientific and technological progress was promoted. The responsibilities of the State Planning Commission were also newly defined. It was charged with preparing long-term plans for the national economy, coordinating these with other CMEA countries, particularly the USSR, working out the basic data for the annual plans, and analysing the fulfilment of the plans. The Economic Council, founded in 1961, was in charge of drafting and supervising the fulfilment of the annual plans. As the growing responsibilities in the economic sphere could no longer be handled by a single body responsible for all spheres of

industry, the Council was abolished in 1966 and ministries for the various branches were set up.

The Central Control Commission founded in 1948 was, in May 1963, replaced by the Workers' and Farmers' Inspectorate (ABI). This body is responsible for supervising the implementation of the decisions of the SED and the government, and helping consolidate socialist legality. As a governmental body and one relevant to society as a whole, the ABI is under the jurisdiction of the Central Committee of the SED and the Council of Ministers and works in close association with the trade unions. The committees, boards and commissions of this body have developed into the most important instrument of popular control. With its assistance hitherto unused reserves in the economy were put to use and contraventions of regulations laid down by the state exposed. In 1965 more than 100,000 people sat on ABI committees on a voluntary basis.

The local elected bodies also drew a growing number of people into the business of governing. The membership of standing commission attached to the elected bodies increased from 232,000 in 1960 to 355,000 in 1965. Forty per cent of the members of these commissions were not elected representatives.

The consolidation of socialist legality was served by a decree issued by the Council of State in April 1963, which provided, among other things, for the increased educational effectiveness of jurisprudence. In addition to the disputes commissions which had come into being in enterprises in 1953, arbitration commissions were set up in 1965 as new social organs of jurisprudence. Acts on the constitution of courts and on the office of state prosecutors, the Youth Act of May 1964 and the Family Act, which was promulgated in 1965, were further developments in socialist legislation. Many proposals submitted by citizens found their way into these laws. Thus the discussion on the Family Bill attracted the participation of 750,000 people. The Youth Act was a concrete expression of the youth policy of the SED and of the socialist

state. Its aim was the promotion of the activity and creative power of the young generation in all spheres and the strengthening of their socialist consciousness. Confidence was to be placed in young people who were to be entrusted with responsibility. The Family Act is based on the principle of complete equality of men and women. It ensures the comprehensive promotion of the family by State and society.

On 21 September 1964 Otto Grotewohl, the GDR's first Prime Minister and long-time chairman of the SED, died. The People's Chamber appointed Willi Stoph as Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the GDR.

Willi Stoph, born on 9 July 1914 in Berlin, a building worker and construction engineer, had joined the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) in 1931 and had participated in its ranks in the antifascist resistance struggle. After 1945 he occupied leading positions in the country's economy. A member of the Central Committee of the SED since 1950, he was elected to the Politbureau in 1953. He won great distinction as Minister of the Interior between 1952 and 1956 and, following the setting up of the National People's Army in 1956, as Minister of National Defence. In 1962 Willi Stoph was appointed as First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the GDR. He made a major contribution, as a member of the party and state leadership, to the strengthening of the GDR.

The meeting of the extended Presidium of the National Council with the Torgau district committee of the National Front provided the curtain raiser for a new people's initiative calling on citizens to join in a campaign to help beautify towns and villages. It was the National Front's aim to improve the working and living conditions of the people by means of improving the appearance of towns and villages, through the development of cultural activities, and through the mobilization of as yet unused local resources to help fulfil economic plans. The new movement was in many ways a continuation of a national campaign run during an earlier period to help rebuild the war-shattered country by means of voluntary work. The

campaign did not only show good results in material things—the Torgau initiative resulted in a gain valued at 2,400 million marks during its first year—but it was also found possible to coordinate political work in the residential areas better and to bring about a closer relationship of the parties and mass organizations affiliated to the National Front under the leadership of the SED.

The proven alliance of the parties of the Democratic Bloc led by the SED also played an important role during the new stage of social development. The parties allied to the SED, i. e. the CDU, DBD, LDPD and NDPD, concentrated to a larger extent on problems connected with the development of society as a whole. Based on their active cooperation in the elected bodies and government departments, in the National Front, the socialist economy and other spheres of life, the officials and members of these parties shared in the continued development of the GDR. They had a particular share in helping to consolidate the alliance of the various classes and strata of the population under the leadership of the working class and its party, to continue to develop the commitment to the socialist state on the part of their neighbours and to draw them into socialist construction to a greater extent.

Basic social changes had taken place in the GDR since the promulgation of the country's first Constitution in October 1949. These had to be enshrined in constitutional law and at the same time the constitutional basis for the further development of socialist society had to be created. In January 1968 the People's Chamber submitted for public discussion the draft of a new, socialist Constitution. Millions of people of all classes and strata participated in more than 750,000 gatherings to make known their opinions. They submitted numerous proposals leading to 118 amendments. New initiatives in socialist emulation were connected with this nationwide discussion.

On 6 April 1968 94.5 per cent of the electorate voted in a referendum in favour of the new Constitution, thus demonstrating their support for the socialist workers' and farmers' state.

The socialist Constitution enshrined the revolutionary achievements and basic social changes which had been won by the GDR's working people. It defined socialist state power as the political organization of the working people in town and countryside together implementing socialism under the leadership of the working class and its Marxist-Leninist party. The leading role of the working class and of the SED as well as the rights of the trade unions as the largest organization of the working people in the comprehensive participation in the running of the state, the economy and of society as a whole, was defined in it. The Constitution also described as inviolable the basis of the socialist political and social order, i. e. the exercise of power by the working people, the alliance of the working class with the class of cooperative farmers, the members of the intelligentsia and other working people, the socialist ownership of the means of production and the management and planning of the development of society. Friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, as well as the close comradeship-in-arms with the armies of the Warsaw Treaty states, were laid down as constitutional principles. The defence of peace and of the socialist homeland became constitutional obligations for all citizens.

#### **8. The integrated socialist system of education**

The GDR had created an efficient system of education which had also gained international recognition. However, the demands made on it increased with continued socialist construction and the growing role of science and technology.

In February 1965 the People's Chamber adopted an Act on the integrated socialist education system. The basic principles underlying this law, worked out by a commission under the chairmanship of Alexander Abusch,

were discussed by hundreds of thousands of people, and 5,000 suggested alterations and additions were submitted. The most important new feature which the law provided was the general introduction of ten-year comprehensive polytechnical education for all children and young people of school age. The state made available extensive funds for this purpose. Although there was a shortage of labour in the GDR and the introduction of ten-year compulsory education at first exacerbated the position in the short run, the SED and government introduced this measure as they looked upon it as an „investment for the future“ and as the creation of an education system meant to fulfil the needs of an advanced socialist society.

The Act defined the content of education under the new conditions and laid down the position and function of the various types of educational institutions. It ensured a uniform educational process starting from pre-school education to comprehensive polytechnical schools, vocational schools and technical colleges, colleges and universities as well as vocational training and further training. It was and remains the purpose of this Act to provide a high standard of education for the people as a whole so that all are able to develop comprehensively, uniting all-round knowledge with a firm class point of view and living a fulfilled and happy life worthy of human beings.

The socialist education system rests on the principle of the unity of education and upbringing, of a scientific approach and of commitment. The integrated nature of the schools and the participation of the public in the education and upbringing of the young generation are not only constitutionally guaranteed but also a feature of everyday life.

The integrated socialist education system is in line with the traditional aims of the revolutionary working-class movement, which could only become a reality on the basis of socialist power and property relations. The children and young people are provided with training and education of a good quality in the natural and social

sciences and in the polytechnical, arts and sports spheres. Nowadays about 200,000 young people enter employment annually, the vast majority having completed 10 years of education.

New curricula, books and teaching aids had to be provided in order to implement the Act. At the end of the sixties polytechnical education underwent a change in as much as it was turned into the preparatory stage for vocational training, new basic skilled trades and vocational training combined with school leaving certificate were introduced and the system of training and further training for working people was expanded.

With the aim of bringing science and production closer together the universities, colleges and institutes of the GDR Academy of Sciences made a start, particularly during the second half of the sixties, to concentrate their research capacities increasingly on the solution of tasks connected with the national economy. By means of the continued socialist changes at the colleges and universities—the third reform of higher education since 1945/46—training and education as well as the management and organization of scientific work were improved. The principles of collective socialist effort increasingly prevailed in scientific work. The setting up of sections at the universities and colleges promoted cooperation in research, training and education beyond the confines previously imposed by the institute framework. At the same time, however, a number of problems arose whose solution required a lengthy period of time. When all was said and done the changes amounted to inroads into university activities which had, at least in part, existed for centuries. Some distortions had to be corrected too, such as the neglect of certain minor disciplines at some institutions.

For the first time ever work proceeded on the basis of a long-term plan in social science research during the 1966-70 Five-Year-Plan. The scientific institutes of the SED, the ministries and Academy institutes were given the function of supervising the social science disciplines; at

the same time they were responsible for long-term planning as well as for the central management and coordination of research. The social sciences increased their efforts to spread Marxism-Leninism, to find solutions for the new problems which the development of society was bringing in its train, to convey the lessons of history and to carry on the debate with bourgeois ideology more effectively. In 1965 the Institute of Marxism-Leninism completed the publication of the works of V. I. Lenin in 40 volumes. Thus there was available for the first time a comprehensive German edition of his works. The year 1968 saw the completion, in 40 volumes, of the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. A History of the German Working-Class Movement in 8 volumes appeared in 1966.

The end of the sixties saw a reform of the Academy. The Academy of Sciences, to whose presidency Hermann Klare was elected in 1968, developed as a research academy of socialist society in the GDR which considers it its responsibility to use its entire potential for the solution of crucial issues both in respect of society as a whole and the economy. The Academy's research potential was streamlined and concentrated in major central institutes which increasingly developed into centres of basic and applied research. Based on the growing importance of research in education, the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the GDR was founded in 1970. The academies, colleges and universities strengthened their cooperation with similar institutions in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries and increasingly engaged in joint research projects.

During the sixties physical culture and sports received a tremendous impetus. The mass sports movement attracted millions of people. In 1966 the first children's and young people's Spartakiad games were held and attracted 1.8 million participants. The Spartakiad movement promoted regular sports activities on the part of children and young people. It also opened the way to many talents and a not inconsiderable number of later Olympic and world champions won their first medals here.

In competitive sports too the far-sighted and multifarious promotion of physical culture and sports by the SED and the socialist state began to bear fruit. In athletics, swimming, rowing and in other sports GDR sportsmen obtained internationally recognized successes. The FRG, in line with its claim to sole representation of all Germans, continued by all means at its disposal to exclude the GDR from equal participation in international competitive sports. As a result of the support extended by the sports associations of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries and of the excellent performance of the GDR's sportsmen and women such as Karin Balzer, Margitta Gummel, Ingrid Krämer-Gulbin, Roland Matthes, Helmut Recknagel, Gustav Adolf Schur, Manfred Wolke and many others, the FRG did not prevail with its claim in this sphere. The GDR's National Olympic Committee obtained all the rights due to a committee of this sort in 1968. The GDR participated with its own team for the first time at the Summer Olympic Games in Mexico in the same year. In number of medals won it occupied third place after the USA and the USSR.

The successes obtained on the playing fields were proof for all to see of the strength of socialism. As a result the GDR became known also in countries whose governments did not maintain diplomatic relations with the GDR as a result of FRG and NATO pressure. The successes contributed to the growing international reputation of the GDR and to increasing pride in the socialist state on the part of the citizens of the GDR.

### **9. The continuing development of socialist national culture**

The discussions between the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the SED and the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, and the cultural community in March 1963 showed the way forward for the further development of the socialist national culture. The discussions made clear

what responsibility those members of the intelligentsia engaged in the cultural sphere bore for deepening the socialist consciousness of the people. It was stressed that socialist realism, notwithstanding all differences in detail, was the most fruitful method in all the arts of acquiring a picture of reality. It was above all necessary to consolidate the committed nature of literature and art and their links to the people. The participants took a decisive stand against portraying the role of the working class and its party in a distorted fashion and to propagate ideological coexistence.

The continuing development of socialist national culture proceeded during bitter ideological struggle with imperialism. It was precisely in the cultural sphere that the class enemy continued his efforts to penetrate the GDR and to channel anticommunism and nationalism as well as scepticism, individualism and other bourgeois concepts and behaviour patterns into the country.

The cultural policy of the SED and the socialist state was a preferential target of imperialist attacks. Jointly with the majority of the cultural community the SED thwarted all endeavours to arouse antagonism between the artists and writers on the one hand and the party of the working class and the socialist state on the other.

The second Bitterfeld Conference in April 1964 came to the conclusion that the relationship between workers and artists in the GDR was a basically new one. The deep chasm between them with its roots in the past had, in all essentials, been overcome. The alliance between the working class and the intelligentsia now rested on uniform political and moral foundations. A basis not only for the development of the arts and literature, but also for artistic activities of many working people, was created.

Cultural exchanges with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries enriched cultural life in the GDR and promoted the continued growth of the socialist national culture. Cultural exchange had as its basis new cultural agreements concluded with the Soviet Union, Poland and Czechoslovakia, Government departments and public

institutions dealing with cultural matters strengthened their cooperation. There was an increase in the exchange of ensembles, orchestras, exhibitions and films.

Under the influence of the Marxist-Leninist cultural policy of the SED and the socialist state and stimulated by the close contact with workers and other working people, numerous artists and writers in their creative work depicted the personalities of workers, of builders of the new society, and of those who were opening the way for the new outlook on work and life. This found its expression in the sphere of fiction and drama in works by Helmut Baierl, Kurt Barthel (Kuba), Juri Brézan, Herbert Nachbar, Erik Neutsch, Dieter Noll, Brigitte Reimann, Helmut Sakowski, Horst Salomon, Max Walter Schulz, Bernhard Seeger, Anna Seghers, Erwin Strittmatter, Joachim Wohlgemuth and Christa Wolf; in the visual arts in works by Rudolf Bergander, Gerhard Bondzin, Fritz Cremer, Lea Grundig, Harald Hakenbeck, Bernhard Heisig, Bert Heller, Paul Michaelis, Willi Neubert, Willi Sitte, Walter Womacka; and in music in works by Paul Dessau, Jean Kurt Forest, Ottmar Gerster, Günter Kochan, Ernst Hermann Meyer and Kurt Schwaen. In the field of feature films Günther Rücker and Konrad Wolf created pioneering works, and the same applied to documentaries by Andrew and Annelie Thorndike as well as by Walter Heynowski and Gerhard Scheumann, not to mention Karl Georg Egel in television. The Berliner Ensemble, the Deutsche Theater, the Weimar Nationaltheater, the Komische Oper and other theatres staged productions attracting international attention even though the number of new plays as yet remained small. It had however become clear that a new generation of socialist writers and artists had emerged and that it was making a major contribution to the GDR's socialist art.

Anna Seghers, the most important representative of the GDR's socialist national literature also played a pioneering role in the artistic treatment of new themes. Her social novel *Die Entscheidung*, which appeared at the end of the fifties, as well as *Das Vertrauen*, published a decade later,

provided a many-layered picture of relations among people during the transition from capitalism to socialism. They made clear the creative role of the working people who develop into new, socialist human beings during the struggle for the solution of social and individual problems and conflicts.

The creative work of Anna Seghers as well as Erwin Strittmatter's novel *Ole Bienkopp*, which is devoted to the pioneers of cooperative agriculture in the GDR; Hermann Kant's *Aula* which depicts artistically problems of the initial stages of socialist construction as illustrated by a group of worker and farmer students; Johannes Bobrowski's *Levins Mühle* which describes the social roots of national conflicts in the West Prussia at the end of the last century through Christian eyes; and other works made the GDR's national literature internationally known.

The development of new human relations also had to be increasingly considered in town planning and architecture. Master plans were drawn up for Berlin and other economically and culturally important centres. Valuable cultural monuments had to have a place in these plans and had to be looked after and restored.

The cultural interests and needs of numerous workers and other working people increased with the continued construction of socialism. The improvement of working and living conditions created new opportunities for further education and cultural activities. Television underwent rapid expansion. Between 1959 and 1969 the number of radio and television subscribers increased from 600,000 to more than 4.3 million. Socialist community work had a major share in raising the cultural level and the cultural needs of the people. Many socialist collectives drew up culture and education plans. Together with the enterprises and local government bodies the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions (FDGB), the Free German Youth (FDJ) and the German Gymnastics and Sports League of the GDR (DTSB) saw to it that existing recreational, educational, cultural and sports facilities were put to better use and new ones provided.

There were closer and more varied contacts between enterprises and cultural institutions, as well as between work collectives and writers and artists.

Individual cultural activities on the part of many working people became an important element in the GDR's cultural life. Numerous amateur choirs, brass and dance bands, circles of worker writers, circles devoted to the visual arts and to films, as well as ensembles of young talents came into being. A growing number of people participated in the workers' festivals and the artistic competitions. New forms of amateur cultural activities such as enterprise and village festivals increased rapidly. There were 340 enterprise festivals in 1970 with about one million participants. The song movement initiated by the FDJ found a great response among the young generation. Thanks to the support extended by the SED, the mass organizations, government departments and many professional artists, numerous amateur art groups and circles improved their artistic standards and the ideological and political efficacy of their work.

Thus cultural life at the start of socialist construction was marked by an abundance of works and activities more in line with the cultural needs of the people. At the same time it had become clear that all aspects of culture, i. e. from the work environment and natural environment and the acquisition of the cultural heritage to the arts and cultural life in factories, towns and villages, had to be increasingly developed as far as their inter-relationship was concerned.

#### **10. The development of international socialist relations**

On 12 June 1964 the GDR and USSR concluded a Treaty on Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Cooperation. This was in line with their joint endeavour to strengthen further fraternal friendship between both states and peoples and to secure peace in Europe and throughout the

world. The treaty described the inviolability of the GDR's frontiers as a pillar of European security. Both sides undertook to render immediate military support to each other in case of an armed attack on one of the parties.

Of special significance were articles 1 and 8 of the treaty. Article 1 defined the principles of inter-governmental relations, particularly stressing socialist internationalism as the major principle. Article 8 laid down that economic, scientific and technological co-operation was to be developed to the maximum possible extent. The treaty described the coordination of the national economic plans on the basis of the decisions of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) as the most important instrument for this purpose. It called for the achievement of the highest possible productivity by co-ordinating plans and through specialization and co-operation. The treaty also laid down closer collaboration in other spheres of activity such as culture, sports and tourism.

In 1967 the GDR also concluded treaties of friendship with Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria, and in 1972 with Romania. Other socialist countries also concluded treaties on friendship, mutual assistance and cooperation among themselves. This was the "second generation" of friendship treaties which were now—after those concluded in the forties and fifties—governing the intergovernmental socialist relations on the basis of international law. The GDR had its firm place in the new system of bilateral treaties. The treaties also frustrated attempts by imperialist circles to cause discord among the socialist countries, to play them off against the Soviet Union and to isolate the GDR from its allies.

The GDR deepened its cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries on the basis of the treaties of friendship and assistance and the decisions and recommendations of the CMEA. The long-term plans and recommendations of the CMEA. The long-term plans for the years 1966 to 1970 and the deliveries resulting therefrom were coordinated. Trade between the CMEA countries increased. Of special significance for the GDR was the long-term trade agreement with the USSR for the

period 1966 to 1970. This secured the GDR's Five-Year-Plan as far as foreign trade was concerned and also helped to frustrate the Hallstein Doctrine in the foreign trade sphere. During the second half of the sixties the GDR increasingly became an attractive foreign trade partner for non-socialist countries as well.

The conclusion of a new agreement on scientific and technological cooperation between the GDR and the USSR in September 1965 was also of significance. The first agreement of this kind, concluded at the beginning of the fifties, had been implemented. It had brought major benefits to both parties. It had helped the GDR to train numerous scientists and managers in the most varied spheres and to create the scientific basis for the material and technological basis of socialism. The new treaty was meant to link the scientific and technological potential of the two countries more closely. For the GDR the agreement meant that it was able to participate in many new fields of science and technology, for example in space research. On its part it undertook to make a contribution in the sphere of science and technology to help strengthen the socialist community.

Of far-reaching importance was the formation of the joint government commission for economic, scientific and technological cooperation between the GDR and the USSR in March 1966. This was a permanent commission chaired by the chairmen of the State Planning Commissions of both countries. As each state occupied the first place in the foreign trade of the other a qualitatively higher stage of economic cooperation had become necessary. But it was not only a matter of transacting foreign trade but also of cooperation in all phases of the social reproduction process. Starting with research and development and proceeding via production to sales cooperation had to be improved both as regards its conception and its actual workings. The joint government commission was the suitable tool for this purpose. It has proven itself as an instrument of bilateral economic integration.

The development of international socialist relations was, since the beginning of the sixties, rendered much more difficult as a result of problems which arose from the policies followed by the Chinese leaders headed by Mao Tsetung. In their "general line" published in the summer of 1963 the Chinese leaders denied the character of the current epoch and the role of the socialist world system as well as the possibility of avoiding a new world war. They slandered the CPSU and other Marxist-Leninist parties and pursued a policy of splitting the communist world movement. The imperialist powers made use of this policy and of the splitting activities of the Chinese leaders in the struggle against socialism and all democratic forces and movements.

The SED administered a decisive rebuff to the anti-Leninist and nationalist policy of the Chinese leaders. It worked for the unity of the communist world movement on the basis of the joint general line which had been adopted by the communist and workers' parties at their international gatherings in 1957 and 1960.

The GDR—at the side of the USSR and the other socialist countries—extended assistance on the basis of solidarity to the Vietnamese people which had had to defend itself for decades against imperialist aggression. Violating international law, the USA had started savage air attacks on the Democratic Republic of Vietnam after it had tried in vain for many years to destroy the liberation movement in South Vietnam by military force. As in many other countries a solidarity movement with Vietnam came into being in the GDR which expressed itself in extensive donations, acts of assistance, meetings and in many other forms. It became the largest solidarity movement to that date in the history of the GDR. It bore witness to the fact that international solidarity had found a firm place in the hearts and minds of millions of people in the GDR.

The GDR also extended help by way of solidarity to Czechoslovakia when counter-revolutionary forces, supported by the enemies of socialism in the capitalist countries, set out in 1967 and 1968 to eliminate the socialist



social and state order and threatened to plunge the country into a civil war. At the side of units of the Soviet Army and the Bulgarian People's Army, the Polish People's Army and the Hungarian People's Army, units of the National People's Army in August 1968 helped the Czechoslovak people to defend socialism against all counter-revolutionary attacks. With its help for the fraternal peoples of Czechoslovakia, the GDR carried out its obligation to protect with all forces at its disposal national achievements as well as world socialism. The close collaboration of the socialist countries in the continued construction of socialism and in the struggle against imperialism brought about the necessity of new forms and methods in the relations between the ruling Marxist-Leninist parties. Regular mutual visits by party and government delegations and meetings of general and first secretaries became the most important form of exchanging views, and the exchange of central committee study delegations developed into the most important method of getting to know the experiences of the fraternal parties. The year 1967 saw the conclusion, for the first time, of arrangements between the SED and the CPSU in cooperation in the ideological and theoretical spheres. Many-sided relations developed between the county committees of the SED and area committees of the CPSU, for example between Berlin and Moscow, Dresden and Leningrad, and Leipzig and Kiev. The SED also deepened cooperation with the fraternal parties in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and other countries.

#### 11. Impending changes on the diplomatic front

The alliance with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, the adherence to the CMEA in 1950, to the Warsaw Treaty in 1955 and the active participation in the development of international socialist relations, gave the GDR firm international backing. But the GDR had to fight

for more than two decades against the diplomatic blockade on the part of the FRG and other NATO powers and for its participation on the basis of equality in international relations.

In 1963 the GDR adhered to the Moscow Test Ban Treaty. This compelled the imperialist powers to recognize the equal status of the GDR in international affairs in a specific area. This happened in face of the bitter resistance of the FRG whose CDU/CSU governments kept to the futile and dangerous policy of "incorporating" the GDR into the FRG even after Konrad Adenauer's resignation in 1963. As late as 1965 the "Research Advisory Council for Questions relating to the Reunification of Germany" drew up a programme for the annexation of the GDR which provided, among other things, for the return of nationally-owned enterprises to Nazi and war criminals and for the dissolution of the LPG's. The arrogation of the sole right to represent all Germans on the part of the FRG and the diplomatic blockade of the GDR, were meant to keep the door open for the annexation of the GDR. The government of the so-called Grand Coalition, set up in December 1966 and consisting of CDU, CSU and SPD politicians, retained these aims. It merely tried to enforce them by more flexible methods. The idea was to split the socialist community, to separate the GDR from its allies and to prepare the restoration of capitalism by way of increased ideological subversion.

The firm entrenchment of the GDR in the socialist community of states frustrated all these plans. Its consistently anti-imperialist policy and the successful socialist construction increased the GDR's prestige in many countries, particularly among the peoples fighting for their liberation. Consulates-General were exchanged with the Iraq, Syria and other African and Asian countries and close economic relations were established. The Chairman of the Council of State, Walter Ulbricht, visited Egypt in February 1965 at the invitation of the Egyptian president, Gamal Abdel Nasser. All the blackmail attempts by the

FRG were not able to prevent this first visit by the GDR's head of State to a non-socialist country. When Israel attacked Egypt and Syria in 1967, the GDR stood by the Arab peoples while the FRG supported the aggressor.

During the sixties the GDR also took the initiative on many occasions to improve its relations with the FRG. But all its proposals were still ignored or turned down. During the same decade it became clear beyond all doubt that the development of opposing social systems in the two countries had led to a historic decision in respect of the national question: in the GDR the socialist German nation began to develop, whereas in the FRG the bourgeois nation continued to exist. The unification of the socialist GDR and the imperialist FRG was unthinkable, and as a result of the FRG's aggressive and revanchist policies the way was closed to a confederation such as had been proposed by the GDR since 1957. Only relations based on international law in the spirit of peaceful coexistence were now possible between the two German states.

In September 1967 Willi Stoph, the GDR's prime minister, submitted a draft treaty to the FRG Chancellor for establishing and cultivating normal relations between the two countries in a way which took the changed circumstances into consideration. Admittedly the proposal was turned down, as so many others had been before it, but now the diplomatic blockade of the GDR instituted by imperialism was also being subjected to increasing criticism in the capitalist countries. A world-wide movement for the recognition of the GDR came into being, and this was not least due to the communist and workers' parties in the capitalist countries which steadfastly stood for the recognition of the GDR. In the FRG it was above all the Communist Party, the DKP,—newly founded in 1968—which demanded the institution of equal relations on the basis of international law between the GDR and the FRG.

The international preconditions for the world-wide recognition of the GDR had to be brought into being. It was therefore of decisive importance that the movement

for the recognition of the GDR should become an essential part of the struggle for a system of collective security in Europe. In July 1966 the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty states, in continuation and amplification of the proposals submitted by the Soviet Union in 1954 and 1955, submitted at its Bucharest meeting a comprehensive programme for securing peace in Europe which was fully supported by the communist and workers' parties of Europe at their Karlovy Vary meeting in April 1967. The essence of the programme was a call to all European governments to recognize in a binding fashion and on the basis of international law the inviolability of frontiers, including those of the GDR, Poland and Czechoslovakia, and to develop among all European states, including the German Democratic Republic, relations on a basis of equality. It was proposed that a conference be convened of all European countries on guaranteeing security in Europe and cooperation on the continent.

The Bucharest meeting was the start of a new stage of the struggle for peace, security and cooperation in Europe. It showed the way forward to a turn from the imperialist cold war to international détente, and it also provided a strong stimulus in the struggle for the international recognition of the GDR. In numerous capitalist and developing countries new friendship societies came into being which stood for the recognition of the GDR, for respecting its frontiers and for making possible its cooperation on a basis of equality in the United Nations. Realists in social democratic and bourgeois parties and governments of capitalist countries were increasingly coming to the conclusion that the arrogant claim on the part of the FRG to represent all Germans and the Hallstein doctrine were instruments of the cold war and grave obstacles on the way to international détente. Among the governments of a growing number of developing countries the realization gained ground that full recognition of the GDR would also serve the interests of their peoples. In 1969 and 1970 Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Algeria and nine other

African and Asian countries established diplomatic relations with the GDR.

The lifting by the capitalist states of the diplomatic blockade, which was in contravention of international law, was now overdue. As yet however the NATO powers, particularly the FRG, refused to face the fact that the GDR was an independent sovereign state which could not have any other kind of relations with the FRG than those customary between independent sovereign states on the basis of general international law and that the GDR could not, in the foreign policy sphere, be represented by anyone but its own government. Making clear this state of affairs, that is the separate nature of the GDR and the FRG, there fore occupied an important place in the ideological work of the SED and the foreign policy of the GDR.

At the end of 1969 a coalition government was established for the first time in the FRG consisting of the SPD and the FDP with Willy Brandt as federal chancellor. In view of the obvious changes in the balance of forces in favour of socialism and the manifest bankruptcy of the FRG's traditional foreign policy towards the socialist countries, this government felt bound to abandon some foreign policy positions which had become untenable. Whereas during the same year the CDU federal chancellor had continued to look upon the GDR as a "phenomenon" or "formation", the new government now for the first time spoke of the existence of two German states. But it too began by trying to counteract the general international recognition of the GDR and to put pressure on the GDR. For this reason the talks between Prime Minister Willi Stoph and FRG Federal Chancellor Willy Brandt on the normalization of relations between the two countries which took place during the first half of 1970 in Kassel and Erfurt remained without result.

At the same time leading politicians in capitalist countries signified their readiness to negotiate on European security problems. Since March 1970 negotiations had been taking place on a settlement of problems connected

with West Berlin between representatives of the USSR, the USA, Great Britain and France. In August 1970 a treaty was signed in Moscow between the USSR and the FRG and in December of the same year between Poland and the FRG in Warsaw. For the first time an FRG government recognized in terms of international law the territorial integrity of all European countries and the inviolability of their frontiers, including the Oder-Neisse frontier and those between the GDR and the FRG.

All this was proof of the fact that trends in the direction of international détente had become visible thanks to the consistent peace policy of the USSR and the other socialist countries and thanks to the efforts of all forces standing for peace. At the same time it became ever more obvious that establishing relations based on international law with the GDR by all countries had become an essential condition for international détente.

## 12. The results and experiences of the sixties

In June 1969 an international meeting of representatives of 75 communist and workers' parties took place in Moscow. The events of the past decade had confirmed that the assessment of the Moscow meetings of 1957 and 1960 on the character and main trends of our epoch had been correct. The socialist order had proved its vitality. All imperialist attempts to split the socialist community had failed. The policy of bringing about splits on the part of the Chinese leaders had been frustrated. Thus the participants in the meeting were in a position to state that the main direction of the development of humanity was being determined by the socialist world system, the international working class and all revolutionary forces. They called for a joint struggle of the working class and all anti-imperialist forces in order to put an end to the crimes of imperialism and to free humanity from imperialism.

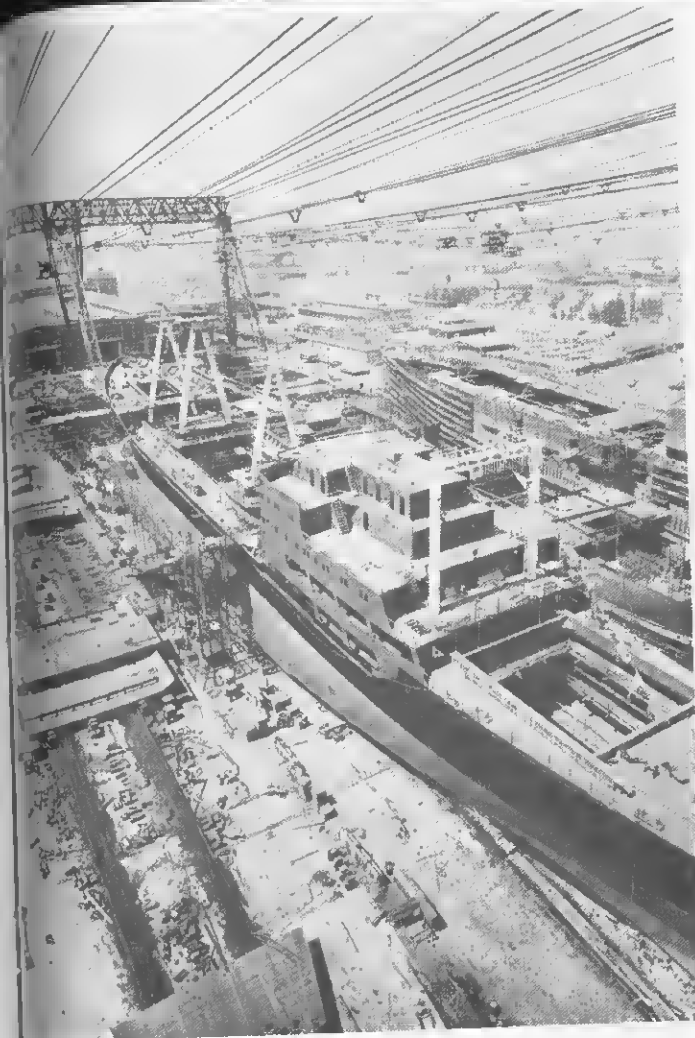
The participants stressed that the development of the

socialist world system had opened up new perspectives for the advance and victory of socialism throughout the world. "The 1960s," declared L. I. Brezhnev, "will occupy a special place in the history of world socialism. It was in this decade that many fraternal countries completed the foundations of socialism and went over to the building of developed socialist society. As it matures the socialist system more and more fully reveals the advantages of its economic, social and political organization and its inherent genuine democracy. All this is a tangible and weighty contribution to our common cause, the cause of consolidating the anti-imperialist front."<sup>33</sup>

The CPSU disposed of the greatest fund of experience in the building and shaping of socialist society. Since the second half of the thirties, after the main tasks of the transition period from capitalism to socialism had been solved, the peoples of the USSR had consolidated the socialist order and developed it further. The fascist aggression and its consequences had greatly complicated and delayed the solution of this question. At the end of the fifties and the beginning of the sixties the Soviet Union had entered the stage of developed and mature socialism, its further development as well as the gradual transition to communism.

The other socialist countries, too, had gathered much significant experience during the sixties in consolidating and developing socialist society. Based on all these perceptions and their collective generalization the communist and workers' parties were able to determine in a more comprehensive and concrete manner the new tasks facing them in the shaping of socialism. They made much progress in elaborating common and objectively uniform views on the characteristics and place in history of developed socialist society.

In the GDR the necessity had matured at the beginning of the sixties—after the victory of the socialist production relations—to shape socialist society in a planned fashion. The SED's strategic orientation, to develop socialism further over a longish period after the conclusion of the



The Warnowwerft shipyards at Rostock-Warnemünde



Wolfen



6th FDGB Congress, November 1963

farmers from the Friedrich Engels cooperative at Schafstädt using modern equipment for higher yields



Actors visiting workers at a Berlin cable factory



An exhibition featuring works by Lea Grundig in the National Gallery. The artist is seen with workers from the Schwedt oil refinery



Residents of Byhleguhre, Lübben district, giving their village a facelift as part of a National Front campaign



Young Pioneers helping senior citizens



A new health centre at Spremberg

Successful participants in the Spartakiad Games



Comrades-in-arms



Solidarity with Vietnam

International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties,  
Moscow, June 1969. The delegation of the SED with,  
from l. to r.: Hermann Axen, Hermann Matern, Walter Ulbricht,  
Erich Honecker and Friedrich Ebert





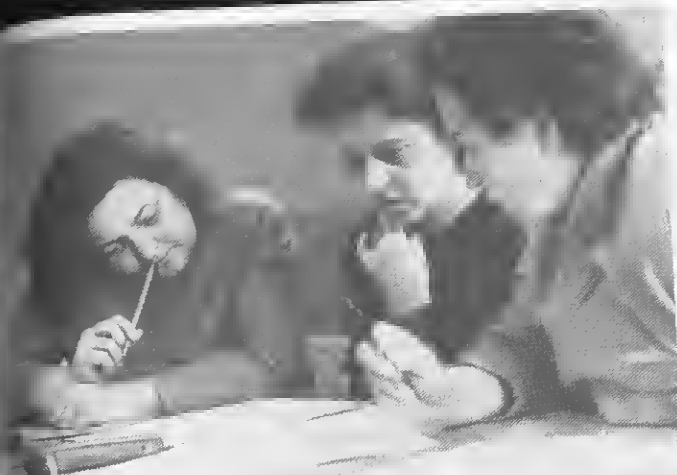
Headquarters of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance in Moscow



The Boxberg power station: a construction site of German-Soviet friendship  
Sorbian Festival in Bautzen



The Fischmarkt in Erfurt



Women attending a further education course  
The large reading room of the Deutsche Bücherei in Leipzig



A friendly handshake at the change of shifts



Berlstedt

The Mato Kosyk Central Sorbian School at Briesen (Brjazyn) near Cottbus



The Leipzig Autumn Fair, 1965

period of transition, had proved correct. Conceptions of socialist society, its stages of development and their criteria have since been developed and deepened in the course of practical experience and in theory. The 6th Congress of the SED in 1963 decided on the comprehensive construction of socialism in the GDR. The decisions of the 7th Congress of the SED in 1967 stressed the interconnection and interrelationship of the main spheres of the life of society as a whole and set the target of shaping socialism as a social system. These and other decisions as well as theoretical works set forth important characteristics of developed socialist society which found their place in the theory and strategy for shaping the new society. But theses were also propounded which proved to be incorrect such as the one which claimed that socialism was a relatively independent social formation. Also the concept then used of a homogeneous socialist community had to be withdrawn. It contained the danger that the differences still existing between the various classes and strata would be pushed into the background and that self-deception might arise in regard to the time still required to do away with these differences.

During the sixties some basic processes were initiated which proved themselves in practice as steps on the way to an advanced socialist society. Among them were the adjustment to the requirements of the scientific and technological revolution and of the international socialist division of labour as well as complex socialist rationalization, to the establishment of closer links between central planning and the responsibility of individual enterprises, the forming of combines in industry and of cooperative associations in agriculture and other measures to concentrate and centralize production, the development of the socialist system of education, the continuation of the reform of higher education and the Academy of Science and the expansion of socialist team work.

During the sixties the GDR's foreign policy—directed at the preservation of peace—assumed new dimensions. Whereas during the fifties it had been directed primarily

at the carrying out of the Potsdam Agreement and at reaching a peace settlement confirming the results of the Second World War and post-war developments, in the sixties the struggle for the principles of peaceful co-existence between states with differing social orders, particularly the struggle for a system of collective security in Europe was thrown into relief. The GDR made an active contribution to the preparation of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe at the side of the USSR and the other socialist countries.

At its 14th session in December 1970 the Central Committee of the SED assessed the results of the 1966 to 1970 Five-Year-Plan and generalized experiences in the further construction of socialist society. Thanks to the efforts of millions of working people the socialist state and social order had been further strengthened and the material and cultural standard of living of the people had continued to improve. The national income now exceeded 100,000 million marks, having risen from 84,000 million marks in 1965 to 108,000 million marks in 1970. Growth was almost double of what it had been during the previous Five-Year-Plan period. Industrial production had risen by 6.5 per cent annually and labour productivity by 6 per cent. Particularly rapid development had taken place in electrical engineering, electronics, petrochemicals, chemical plant construction, the manufacture of agricultural machinery and light metal engineering. The cooperative farmers and agricultural workers had increased the output of animal products by 21 per cent according to plan. As far as fat stock, poultry and eggs were concerned the plan was exceeded.

On the other hand the rise in crop yields and milk was not achieved due to adverse weather conditions in 1969 and 1970. Foreign trade turnover rose by 60 per cent, this being greatly in excess of the plan's target.

Progress in the continued improvement of the living conditions of the people was mirrored in the increase of 26 per cent in retail trade turnover and the rise, in real terms, of 22 per cent in individual income. The rebuilding

of the city centres of Berlin, Dresden, Karl Marx Stadt, Leipzig and other centres made progress. New towns or residential areas were built in Halle Neustadt and Rostock Lütten Klein.

At the same time many new and complicated problems arose out of developments connected with the Five-Year-Plan. Some disproportions in the national economy had become exacerbated as a result of structural policy decisions and the addition of some new projects to the plan. This applied particularly to energy output and its requirements as well as the manufacturers of finished products and the supply industry. Supplying the economy with raw and other materials ran into increasing difficulties. Major plan deficits had come into being in some spheres, e.g. in the construction industry and in the foundries. All this complicated the economic situation, led to difficulties in consumer supply and acted as a brake on the activities of the working people.

The Central Committee expressed the opinion that it is essential to base oneself on the objective economic laws of socialism and take the actual situation into consideration. It opposed concepts of the priority of structural policies and dynamics at the expense of the planned, proportionate development of the economy and rejected unrealistic wishful thinking. It decided upon steps to guarantee the continuity and stability of production and continuously to improve consumer supplies. The SED directed attention to the rapid development of production in the supply and raw material sectors and to raising labour productivity and efficiency.

The 14th session of the Central Committee of the SED showed how to overcome the difficulties which had arisen and how to achieve a new economic upturn. Its decisions were aimed at the integrated development of the socialist national economy and socialist society as a whole in order to create the best possible conditions for unfolding the creativity of the working class and all other working people.

## **IV.**

**The further  
development of advanced  
socialist society**

**1971—1978**

### 1. The 8th Congress of the SED

The 24th Congress of the CPSU, which was held from 30 March to 9 April 1971, came to the conclusion that world socialism had entered a new stage of development. The advantages of socialism and its historic superiority over imperialism were able to come to the fore in recent years more clearly than in the past. It was possible and necessary to satisfy in an ever more comprehensive fashion the growing material and cultural needs of the people. The conditions had matured to deepen the international socialist division of labour and for the transition to socialist economic integration. A comprehensive peace programme adopted by the 24th Congress showed how to restrain the aggressive forces further and assure peace and international security.

The 16th session of the Central Committee of the SED on 3 May 1971 endorsed the report of the SED delegation to the 24th Congress of the CPSU, presented by Erich Honecker. It stressed that the role of the CPSU as pioneer of the progress of humanity was gaining in importance with the USSR's advance towards communism.

The 16th session agreed to Walter Ulbricht's request to relieve him of his duties as First Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED on grounds of age and elected him Chairman of the SED in recognition of his services. Following a proposal by the Politbureau submitted by Walter Ulbricht to the plenum, the 16th session elected Erich Honecker First Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED.

Erich Honecker, born on 25 August 1912 in Neunkirchen

in the Saarland, son of a miner and a roof tiler by trade, had fought in the ranks of the revolutionary workers' movement since his early youth. He joined the KPD (Communist Party of Germany) in 1929. After 1931 he worked as an official of the KJVD (Young Communist League of Germany). He was imprisoned between 1935 and 1945 on account of his active participation in the antifascist resistance struggle. After the liberation from Nazism he became one of the founders of the FDJ (Free German Youth). As Chairman of its Central Council from 1946 to 1955 he played an outstanding role in the development of the FDJ into a socialist youth organization. Since the founding of the SED he had belonged to its Executive and later its Central Committee. In 1950 he became an alternate member of the Politbureau and in 1958 a full member and secretary of the Central Committee. He did outstanding work in the party leadership in working out and implementing the SED's policy.

A decade had passed since the conditions had been created enabling socialism to be developed in the GDR on its own basis. Many issues had arisen in both the home and foreign policy spheres which had reached the point of demanding a solution. This was what faced the 8th Congress of the SED which was held in Berlin from 15 to 19 June 1971.

The 8th Congress decided upon the strategy and tactics for the further shaping of advanced socialist society in the GDR and elaborated the individual tasks to be solved in this connection. Its guiding decisions based themselves on the experience gained to date in building socialism in the GDR and on the perceptions and experiences of the CPSU and the other fraternal parties. The party identified the place of advanced socialism in history and stressed that it would be a fairly long time before its construction was completed and that what was required were considerably greater productive forces and a higher level both of socialist social relations and of the socialist consciousness of all working people.

More clearly than ever before the 8th Congress stressed

the purpose of socialism and hence the party's most important concern. Erich Honecker declared in the report of the Central Committee: "We only know one aim which permeates the entire policy of our party: to do everything for the well-being of every human being, for the happiness of the people and for the interests of the working class and all working people. This is the purpose of socialism. This is what we are working and fighting for."<sup>34</sup> The larger economic potential made it possible—and this was necessary for the further development of socialist society—to utilize economic progress more rapidly and in a more comprehensive fashion for the improvement of the working and living conditions of the people. Accordingly the continued increase of the people's material and cultural standard of living on the basis of the rapid development of production, of increased efficiency, of scientific and technological progress and of the growth of labour productivity was declared to be the central policy in the Directive for the 1971-75 Five-Year-Plan presented by Willi Stoph and adopted by the Congress. This central policy made clear the interrelationship between the aim of the SED's policy and the means by which this was to be accomplished.

The Congress declared the intensification of production as the main direction of the further development of the socialist economy. It stressed the great opportunities inherent in socialist rationalization and the important role of science and technology. Continuous and stable development and a more effective economic structure were to be achieved during the next Five-Year-Plan. The more efficient production of more and better consumer goods and better retail and service facilities were declared to be tasks of importance. To intensify agriculture and apply industrial-type methods of production had become essential in order to carry out the central policy and to develop the economy on planned and proportionate lines.

The Congress decided on the most comprehensive social policy programme in the history of the GDR. It

provided for wage and pension increases, improved services and higher spending in other social spheres. Its heart was the housing construction programme. It was particularly the living conditions of the working class which were to be improved by way of providing 500,000 newly-built, modernized or enlarged dwellings. At the same time far-reaching decisions were adopted for the development of education and health care, protection of the environment and for the promotion of culture.

The Congress confirmed that the GDR was to be a component part of the socialist community for all time. It described as a basic precondition for realizing the vital interests of the working class and the other working people the still firmer entrenchment of the GDR in this community and making the alliance with the Soviet Union still closer. A significant place in discussions at the Congress was also taken up by the GDR's role in the further strengthening of the socialist community, particularly in the development of socialist economic integration and within the framework of the coordinated foreign and military policies of the socialist defence coalition.

In line with the peace programme of the 24th Congress of the CPSU the SED adopted a five-point programme as its contribution to peace and security in Europe. It expressed these aims and attitudes of the SED and the GDR:

- (1) the earliest possible convocation of a European security conference; (2) admission of the GDR to UN and its specialized agencies; (3) the readiness on the part of the GDR to establish diplomatic relations with all countries; (4) establishing normal relations on the basis of international law with the FRG; (5) normalization of the relationship between the GDR and West Berlin.

In this connection the SED stated that history had already sat in judgement on the national question. It rejected the concepts propagated by the bourgeois parties and Social Democratic politicians in the FRG according to which a united German nation was alleged to exist and "special inner-German relations" were said to obtain



between the GDR and the FRG. The historical inevitability of the development of society and the irreconcilable antagonism between socialism and imperialism had objectively resulted in an increasing divergence between the socialist GDR and the imperialist FRG in all social spheres. In contradistinction to the FRG, in which the bourgeois German nation—split into antagonistic classes—continued to exist, the development of the socialist German nation had commenced with the setting up of the political power of the working class and the construction of socialism. Relations between the GDR and the FRG were possible only as they exist between countries with opposing social systems, i.e. relations of peaceful coexistence on the basis of international law.

The new tasks made it necessary to enable the entire working class to do increasing justice to its position in society. Congress obligated all members, committees and organizations of the party always to pay due attention to the ideas, proposals, requirements and interests of the workers. It stressed the responsibility of the trade unions as schools of socialism, and particularly the growing role of the Marxist-Leninist party. The business of leadership, the Congress confirmed, consists in the final analysis in the political leadership of society. The leading role of the SED ensures the firm unity of the party, the working class and all other working people. It is crucial for all successes achieved in socialist construction.

The Central Committee elected by the 8th Congress elected Hermann Axen, Friedrich Ebert, Gerhard Grüneberg, Kurt Hager, Erich Honecker, Werner Krolkowski, Werner Lamberz, Günter Mittag, Erich Mückenberger, Alfred Neumann, Albert Norden, Horst Sindermann, Willi Stoph, Walter Ulbricht, Paul Verner and Herbert Warnke as members of the Politbureau and Georg Ewald, Walter Halbritter, Werner Jarowinsky, Günther Kleiber, Erich Mielke, Margarete Müller and Harry Tisch as alternate members of the Politbureau. Erich Honecker was elected First Secretary of the Central Committee.

The 8th Congress was an outstanding event in the

history of the SED and of the GDR. It commenced a new stage in shaping advanced socialism in the GDR in alliance with the USSR and the other states of the socialist community. Its far-reaching decisions decisively influence the life of the people of the GDR to this day.

## **2. The unity of economic and social policy**

The decisions of the 8th Congress of the SED set off major initiatives on the part of the workers, cooperative farmers, the intelligentsia and other working people. Numerous collectives at factories adhered to the appeal of the workers at the Elstertal steel works in Silbitz, which called for planned production and intelligent rationalization for the benefit of all, and for the continuous fulfilment and over-fulfilment of the plan. At the same time their emulation programmes contained clauses whose fulfilment would result in the direct improvement of their working and living conditions. As far as agriculture was concerned, the opening shots in the emulation campaign after the congress were fired by the LPG "Weltfrieden" in Tucheim, Genthin district. Many cooperative farmers and agricultural workers set themselves the aim of intensifying agricultural production by way of cooperation and transition to industrial-type methods of production. Here too the idea was a simultaneous improvement of working and living conditions.

In line with the decisions of the 8th Congress the SED and the government and managements concentrated their energies on ensuring the stable and continuous development of the socialist economy. Not only the stability of the high growth rates and the rhythm of production had to be assured but also and to the same extent stable supplies and consumer prices. It was precisely this approach and this constant linking of economic and social policy which corresponded to the general line of the SED and the socialist state, and was described as the central

policy. Its essence is that economic activity in advanced socialist society must create the means for the constant improvement of the people's working and living conditions and that the actual needs must provide the decisive starting point for the management and planning of the national economy.

To implement the central policy required major efforts. The disproportions which had cropped up in the economy in the late sixties or which had at least become more readily apparent then, were a disturbing factor in the continuous development of the economy and also in supplying the population. To overcome them was not something which could be done immediately and it was also necessary to create clarity everywhere about the essence of the central policy, particularly about the inseparable connection between stable economic growth and social policy. In so doing opinions to the effect that the central policy was only a temporary line, had to be opposed. The SED declared expressly that the central policy was a fundamental and long-term policy arising out of the basic economic laws of socialism and a method with which the working class implements its historic mission. It has major consequences on society and is a dynamic force in the direction of communism.

In the late sixties and early seventies the contradiction between socialist production relations and the increasing socialization of production in the GDR on the one hand and the property relations in privately-owned factories, enterprises with state participation and craftsmen's co-operatives producing on an industrial scale on the other, came to the fore ever more clearly. The productivity and efficiency of most of these enterprises, which were largely engaged in the production of consumer goods and frequently had major export contracts to meet was below that of nationally-owned enterprises. The partial survival of capitalist property relations acted as a brake on the development of the consciousness and initiative of their workers. It had therefore become increasingly urgent to bring about socialist production relations in this sphere too.

In February 1972 the SED leadership and the Council of Ministers decided to turn private industrial and building firms, enterprises with state participation as well as large craftsmen's cooperatives (which to all intents and purposes were industrial establishments), into nationally-owned enterprises. The socialist state purchased the shares in private hands and those belonging to co-operatives. By mid-1972 11,300 new nationally-owned enterprises had been set up by state commissions created for the purpose. The new firms employed 585,000 workers. Their annual output was valued at 27,000 million marks. 85 per cent of the former entrepreneurs, co-directors and managers were given responsible positions in the newly established firms. It was above all due to the persevering political, ideological and organisational work of the county and district committees of the SED that this action was carried out within a few months essentially without any disruption in production. The active participation of numerous members of the LDPD, the NDPD and the CDU also contributed to its success.

Thus the process, begun in 1956, of turning private industrial enterprises into nationally-owned ones through the purchase by the socialist state of shares in them, was now complete. Socialist production relations were consolidated and state-owned socialist property underwent a considerable increase. The universal introduction of socialist production relations in industry strengthened the leading role of the working class and brought about more favourable conditions for the development of the political and moral unity of the people of the GDR.

In line with the decisions of the 8th Congress increased weight was put on the intensification of the economy as far as economic policy and socialist emulation were concerned. It increasingly proved to be the decisive factor in economic growth and as indispensable if the growing material and cultural needs of the people were to be satisfied ever better.

The workers in many plants made major efforts to make better use of existing production facilities, to modernize

them and to produce more without increasing the labour force by making systematic use of scientific and technological progress. The workers at the VEB Ernst Thälmann Works at Magdeburg incorporated their pledges in a counter-plan. Based on their example the shop stewards at many other plants decided upon counter-plans of this sort. Horst Franke and Gerd Pfeiffer of the VEB Elbtalwerk Heidenau developed a new form of emulation contest based on personal, creative plans and making use of the experiences of Soviet workers. The plans promoted measurable competitions between the work teams and individual workers.

After stagnating at the end of the sixties the innovators' movement recorded a tremendous upswing. The number of innovators increased from 661,000 in 1970 to 1.2 million in 1973 and the value of their suggestions rose from around 2.5 to 3.5 million marks. About 60 per cent of the innovators were production workers. It was in 1973 that more than 200,000 work teams competed for the first time for the title of "Collective of Socialist Labour".

Major rationalization projects were realized as a result of the active participation of innovators and socialist work teams. It was above all workers who spoke up at conferences called by enterprises about shortcomings in production and who submitted proposals on intensification and the efficiency of production. Many factories drew up intensification programmes. They conducted an emulation campaign which called for the best possible use to be made of every mark, hour and ounce of material. The party and trade unions gained increasing experience when formulating the aims of emulation campaigns to take into consideration the concrete conditions and plans of individual factories and also of combines and entire branches of the economy and to develop emulation drives of the most varied kinds.

Regulations issued by the Council of Ministers in March 1973 on the responsibilities, rights and duties of nationally owned enterprises, associations of such enterprises and combines, increased their responsibilities as far as the

management of the entire production process was concerned and for the drafting and implementation of the plans. In order to enable them to master the extensive expanded production process better, the combines were developed further and additional ones established. The combines proved themselves as an up-to-date form of managing socialist industry and were in accord with the process of socializing production.

The cooperative farmers and agricultural workers also made major efforts to intensify production by way of cooperation and the transition to industrial-type methods of production, by use of chemical fertilizers, mechanization and land improvement as well as by cultivating and breeding more productive types of plants and animals. Large funds were made available for the expansion of the material and technical basis of agriculture. There was growing direct cooperation between farmers and workers in production. Of particular importance as footholds of the working class in the rural areas in this connection were the nationally owned food processing industry, the district workshops for agricultural machinery as well as the agrochemical centres.

A key position in social development in the countryside was occupied by the large-scale production units in crop cultivation (KAP), their number having doubled from 1972 to 1973 to over a thousand. About 60 per cent of the area under cultivation was worked by these establishments. Cooperative councils managed and organized the co-ordination of KAPs, the district workshops for agricultural machinery, and the agrochemical centres. As far as stock-breeding was concerned industrial-type enterprises were expanded, others modernized and new, still more efficient ones built.

The successful and long-standing policy of alliance also proved itself in the carrying out of the central policy. As a result of government assistance and the issuing of new licenses as well as through cooperation with nationally-owned industrial and service enterprises, the cooperative and private craftsmen, retailers and small scale traders—a

total of altogether more than 500,000 working people, including those employed by them—were able to make a more effective contribution to supplying the population and hence to carrying out the central policy.

The decisions of the 8th Congress and the hard work of the people resulted in a consolidation of the economy and in the increased stability and continuity of production. In spite of additional burdens resulting from the crisis on the capitalist world market, which started at the end of 1973, and the considerable price increases for raw materials and fuel, the economic plans were fulfilled and higher growth rates were recorded particularly in the supply industries, energy and consumer goods. The close economic cooperation with the USSR and the other CMEA countries played a major part in this.

The favourable development of the economy made possible far-reaching measures to implement the social policy programme adopted by the 8th Congress. The joint decision of the Central Committee of the SED, the National Executive of the FDGB and the Council of Ministers in April 1972 provided for increases in old age pensions and benefits on the part of the social insurance scheme for 3.5 million people; the special promotion of the interests of working mothers, young marrieds and large families; the improvement of housing, particularly for workers; and the fixing of rents for new flats at an appropriate level in relation to incomes. Minimum wages were raised for 1.7 million workers. All these steps increased the workers' share in the national income and strengthened their position in society.

Major efforts were made in housing construction. Of the 500,000 newly-built or modernized dwellings provided for under the 1971–75 Five-Year-Plan 330,000 had already been completed by 1973. In October 1973 the SED Central Committee adopted a comprehensive housing construction programme for the period from 1976 to 1990. The idea was to build or modernize between 2.8 and 3 million dwellings during this period, which, added to the existing stock of 6.2 million dwellings at the beginning

of the seventies, were to solve the housing problem as a social issue. At the same time provision was made to provide the necessary crèches, kindergartens, schools, shopping centres and similar facilities simultaneously with the flats.

The SED, the FDGB and the Council of Ministers furthermore decided to improve medical care, to increase wages and salaries for some groups and to raise minimum annual leave from 15 to 18 days.

The successes achieved in carrying out the central policy resulted in increasing numbers of people realizing that hard work would favourably affect their standard of living not in the distant future but immediately.

Their confidence in the soundness of the SED's policy and of the socialist state increased and the successes gained spurred them on to improve their work performance. Thus strong impulses for the development of the consciousness of the working class and the other working people as well as for the unfolding of their sense of initiative, emanated from the struggle to implement the central policy.

The unity of party and people was a guarantee for the gradual solution of any problems which might arise during this process of development. As an example, the increase in labour productivity did not, for a while, make the anticipated progress, and intensification in some industries did not proceed in the manner planned. Expanding the energy basis, the supply of raw materials and increasing the GDR's export potential turned out to be particularly difficult problems. The SED took a thoroughly realistic view of the difficulties and development problems which arose and put forward solutions. It confirmed its determination, backed by the great efforts of the people, to adhere unswervingly to the policy adopted at the 8th Congress.

### 3. The political organization of socialism

The 8th Congress had stressed that the role of the state would continue to gain in importance in the shaping of advanced socialist society. The new dimensions and qualitative changes in the national economy and the intensive interlocking of its branches resulted in increasing demands being made on the management and planning of social development. New responsibilities resulted from the greatly extended cooperation with the CMEA countries. The expansion of relations with other countries and international organizations presented the socialist state with increasing demands. In the first place, however, the increasing consciousness of the working people required improved standards as far as the performance of government departments was concerned and a businesslike atmosphere of confidence. The initiative of the working people had to be promoted by the state and it was also their job to provide the assurance that the results of the efforts made by society as a whole would benefit every individual. Finally the secure protection of the socialist homeland and the struggle against the more flexible methods now being applied by imperialism in the confrontation with socialism, demanded the continued strengthening of socialist state power.

In order to do justice to these increased demands the People's Chamber enacted several important items of legislation after the 8th Congress.

The Act of October 1972 on the Council of Ministers of the GDR increased the rights and responsibilities of the Council of Ministers and the ministries with regard to guiding and planning of all spheres of the life of society. The basic responsibility of the Council of Ministers is the constant attention it has to give to the fulfilment of the central policy. The Act on the local assemblies and their executive departments, adopted in July 1973, whose draft was discussed by 1.5 million people, defined in more detail the responsibilities of the local assemblies, their

councils, commissions and elected members for the fulfilment of the state plans and the improvement of the working and living conditions of the people in conjunction with the nationally-owned enterprises and combines.

Jointly with enterprises the assemblies and their councils initiated steps to improve commuter traffic and supplies to the population, to expand health and social care facilities and to promote local recreation facilities and the protection of the environment. Quite a few impulses emanated from a meeting of more than a thousand activists of the National Front which was held in Dresden in November 1972. It called for the continuation of the campaign to improve the appearance of towns and villages.

The first municipal associations came into being in Berstede and other areas during the second half of the sixties as a result of the joint efforts of towns and villages for the solution of problems common to them. After the 8th Congress of the SED numerous additional associations had been formed. They functioned on the basis of a statute adopted by the local assemblies which dealt with their relations with the enterprises situated in their respective territories and contained a long-term programme. Steps were taken jointly to promote territorial rationalization, maintenance and repairs, to improve housing conditions and to establish service and sports facilities and libraries. At the end of 1973 there were already 244 such associations consisting of 1,825 towns and villages.

On 1 August 1973 the Chairman of the Council of State of the GDR and long-time First Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED, Walter Ulbricht died. The People's Chamber elected Willi Stoph Chairman of the Council of State on 3 October 1973 and nominated Horst Sindermann as Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the GDR.

Horst Sindermann, born in Dresden on 5 September 1915 and a journalist by profession, joined the Young Communist League in 1929. On account of his active participation in the antifascist resistance struggle he was

imprisoned for eleven and a half years. After liberation Horst Sindermann occupied responsible positions in the KPD and the SED. In 1963 he became a member of the Central Committee and First Secretary of the Halle county organization of the SED. Since 1963 he had been an alternate member and since 1967 a full member of the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the SED. In 1971 he was appointed deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of the GDR.

In January 1974 the People's Chamber adopted an Act on the participation of the young generation in shaping advanced socialist society and on its all-round promotion. The draft had been discussed by more than 5.4 million people. By enacting this law the socialist state continued the successful tradition of placing confidence in the up-and-coming generation and giving it responsibility. To help shape advanced socialist society, to strengthen friendship with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, and to exercise anti-imperialist solidarity, these are great and revolutionary tasks facing the young generation. Their fulfilment requires a readiness to serve, initiative and most of all a clear political standpoint.

Also of significance for the further development of socialist law was the Civil Code which came into force in January 1976 and was designed to promote the socialist way of life. With its promulgation the last remnants of bourgeois law in the GDR were made invalid.

Socialist democracy found its expression not only in its laws but also and above all in the daily activities of millions of citizens. In 1974 close to 200,000 people were active as elected representatives, 550,000 worked in permanent commissions and groups attached to local assemblies and 335,000 in the 17,000 committees of the National Front. A total of 660,000 people belonged to parent-teacher associations and parents' advisory committees. 45,000 were elected lay judges and 184,000 were members of the various committees and other bodies of the Workers' and Farmers' Inspectorate.

The share of the working class in these public activities

had risen. Thus 57 per cent of the members of the People's Chamber and 60 per cent of the members of local representative bodies were of working class descent. More than 80 per cent of all mayors were former workers or farmers. Of the 7.8 million members of the FDGB 1.7 million were elected representatives of the workers, 234,000 of them being shop stewards. Hundreds of thousands of workers and office employees were members of youth and women's commissions and of permanent production committees. Millions of workers annually took part in discussing the Plan and the reports of their directors in socialist enterprises. Democracy also developed successfully on a cooperative basis in LPGs, cooperative associations and in craftsmen's cooperatives.

All these facts, which bear witness to the active participation of millions of working people in managing and planning the development of society as a whole, are beyond the ken of bourgeois democracy. At the same time they prove that imperialist propaganda about the "totalitarian" character of the socialist state and economic order is slanderous.

In this manner the political organization of socialism in the GDR which had come into being in the course of the socialist changes continued its development after the 8th Congress of the SED. The political organization of socialism comprises the system of public and state organizations and institutions. Through them the working class, under the leadership of the SED, realizes its political power, consolidates the alliance with the other labouring classes and states, manages the planned development of socialist society, guarantees its reliable protection and shapes socialist relations between society, the collectives and the individual.

The core of the political organization of socialism is provided by the SED, the party of the working class and all the working people. Its job is to provide political leadership for the development of society in the GDR on the foundations of scientifically-based strategy and tactics. The state is the main instrument of the working class for

Preamble to the GDR Constitution of 6 April 1968 as amended  
on 7 October 1974:

"In continuation of the revolutionary traditions of the German working class and on the basis of the liberation from fascism, the people of the German Democratic Republic, has, in accord with the processes of historical development in our time, realized its right to socio-economic, political and national self-determination and is building an advanced socialist society.

"Imbued with the will freely to decide its own affairs and to continue unswervingly along the road of socialism and communism, peace, democracy and international friendship, the people of the German Democratic Republic has given itself this socialist Constitution."

the continued implementation of its historic mission. Also part of the political organization of socialism are the allied parties, i. e. the DBD, CDU, LDPD and NDPD with their approximately 350,000 members, the mass organizations, the National Front, the professional and other voluntary associations of working people, the work teams in the factories and institutions and the numerous honorary committees in the most varied spheres of the life of society as a whole as well as the system of legal and social norms. The interrelations between all parts of the political organization of socialism are becoming increasingly multifarious.

The far-reaching changes which had come about not only in the GDR but also in international relations since the adoption of the socialist Constitution in 1968 were taken into account in the Act to Supplement and Amend the Constitution of the GDR which came into force on 7 October 1974, the 25th anniversary of the GDR. The new preamble of the Constitution states that the people of the GDR, in continuing the revolutionary traditions of the German working class and based on the liberation from

In Fortsetzung  
der revolutionären Traditionen  
der deutschen Arbeiterklasse  
und gestützt  
auf die Befreiung vom Faschismus  
hat das Volk  
der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik  
in Übereinstimmung mit den Prozessen  
der geschichtlichen Entwicklung unserer Epoche  
sein Recht auf sozial-ökonomische,  
staatliche  
und nationale Selbstbestimmung verwirklicht  
und gestaltet  
die entwickelte sozialistische Gesellschaft.

Erfüllt von dem Willen,  
seine Geschicke frei zu bestimmen,  
unbeirrt auch weiter den Weg  
des Sozialismus und Kommunismus,  
des Friedens, der Demokratie  
und Völkerfreundschaft zu gehen,  
hat sich das Volk  
der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik  
diese sozialistische Verfassung  
gegeben.

fascism had, in line with the processes of our epoch, implemented its right to self-determination and had built an advanced socialist society.

The GDR was described as a socialist state of workers and farmers which is allied forever and irrevocably with the USSR and an inseparable part of the socialist community. The Constitution entrenched the results which had been achieved since the 8th Congress in the further improvement of the GDR's socialist state and social order. The responsibilities and powers of the supreme organ of state, the People's Chamber, the Council of State and the Council of Ministers were clearly defined and coordinated.

The Constitution was also amended and supplemented where account had to be taken of the completely separate nature of the GDR and the FRG. This is the Constitution of the socialist German nation which is emerging in the GDR. This is a historically new type of nation, a stable society of classes and strata, allied in friendship and free of antagonistic contradictions, led by the working class and its Marxist-Leninist party. The socialist German nation comprises the people of the GDR which lives on the territory of the GDR and which has created a sovereign socialist state. Its economic foundation is the socialist national economy based on public ownership. The ruling ideology is Marxism-Leninism. The socialist German nation in the GDR is an inseparable part of the community of socialist nations.

#### **4. The transition to socialist economic integration. The GDR-USSR Treaty of Friendship**

The far-reaching tasks in shaping advanced socialist society and the confrontation with imperialism required the closer association of the countries forming the socialist community. The decisive material basis for this was provided by the transition to socialist economic integration.

This is a long-term process covering all spheres of the economy and carefully directed by the ruling Marxist-Leninist parties. At the beginning of the seventies the conditions had matured in the CMEA countries for the gradual transition to socialist economic integration. Their social development had increasingly approximated notwithstanding all outstanding differences with historical origins, and the production potential had grown considerably. The countries had accumulated experience in international socialist cooperation during the course of more than two decades.

The 25th meeting of the CMEA in July 1971 adopted the "Integrated Programme for the continued deepening and expansion of the socialist economic integration of the CMEA member countries". This programme contains the main aims, directions and methods of the economic, scientific and technological cooperation of the CMEA countries for the next 15 to 20 years. The achievement of maximum efficiency and the stable growth of the socialist economies by means of the increasing interlocking, on a planned long-term basis, of the research and production potential of the participating countries is the target which has been set in this programme.

The implementation of this integrated programme is tied to the continuation of tried and tested forms of cooperation such as in foreign trade and the exchange of experience to which are to be added new forms and spheres of collaboration. Thus the participating states, among them the GDR, began jointly to plan, finance and carry out, as part of the process of the division of labour, the building of new large industrial plants and the utilization of raw materials. These projects included the joint erection of a large cellulose combine at Ust-Ilimsk and an asbestos combine at Kyembai as well as the opening up of the Orenburg gas condensate deposit in the USSR, the building of the 2,750 kilometre Soyuz natural gas pipeline from Orenburg to the USSR's Western frontier, and cooperation in the production of ferrous raw materials. The CMEA also set up additional associations, e. g. for con-



structing textile machinery and the production of synthetic fibres.

In the middle of the seventies further progress was also achieved by the CMEA countries in cooperating in the sphere of planning. Based on the integrated programme, the 1976—1980 Five-Year-Plans were for the first time based on the long-term requirements of socialist economic integration.

The 30th meeting of the CMEA in July 1976 was in a position to state that the CMEA countries were able to provide about 90 per cent of their raw material requirements from their own resources. More than 70 per cent of the machines and equipment imported by them were manufactured in the CMEA area. The mutual foreign trade turnover of the CMEA countries increased from 33,300 million roubles in 1970 to 71,000 million roubles in 1975. In order to develop socialist economic integration in a planned manner, the meeting decided to work out joint programmes for key branches in industry for periods of between 15 and 20 years.

The GDR played a prominent part in the work of the CMEA and its bodies and multilateral associations. It also intensified bilateral cooperation. The GDR's foreign trade turnover with other CMEA countries, which were joined by Cuba in 1972, increased from 26,700 million marks in 1970 to 49,200 million marks in 1975. The export and import of specialized products increased at a higher rate than trade as a whole.

Cooperation on the part of the GDR was particularly close with the USSR, its largest partner in the economic sphere. Trade between the two countries increased by 50 per cent between 1971 and 1975 as compared to the previous Five-Year-Plan period. The share of trade emanating from products manufactured on the basis of the division of labour between the two countries rose from 0.7 per cent in 1970 to 27 per cent in 1974. A start was made with the coordination of the long-term development of the two economies. The GDR—USSR Joint Government Commission made a major contribution to

the development of multifarious cooperation relations. Additional joint solutions were worked out to ensure the supply of energy and fuel, a central problem in the development of modern socialist economies. Both countries commenced working out joint concepts for the development of entire branches of industry. They made a start on bringing about the uniformity of technical standards.

The GDR and the USSR gathered initial experiences in organizing joint economic bodies such as Assofoto in photochemistry and Domokhim in household chemicals. Direct relations increased between ministries, enterprises and scientific institutions of the two countries. In 1975 well over half of all research work of the Academy of Sciences of the GDR was carried out jointly with Soviet partners. Of particular importance for the GDR were the joint efforts in the sphere of cosmic research, nuclear energy, quantum electronics and protein research. The exchange of production workers between enterprises in the two countries also started to develop. In 1974 work commenced on the Druzhba line, the GDR's section of the Soyuz natural gas pipeline. The FDJ proclaimed this a central youth project.

Bilateral cooperation also developed successfully with Poland, Czechoslovakia and other CMEA countries. The GDR and Poland built the Friendship cotton combine in Zawiercie, the first joint production enterprise in the CMEA area. A 138-kilometre long ethylene pipeline came on stream for the joint olefine complex of the petrochemical works in Böhlen and of the chemical combine at Záluží, Czechoslovakia.

As in the economic, scientific and technological spheres, versatile relations also developed between the socialist countries in other spheres. The year 1973 saw the first long-term plan for cooperation between the GDR and the USSR in the cultural sector and agreements on collaboration in the ideological and theoretical fields.

The hitherto largest joint project between the two countries in the social science sphere was taken in hand

with the joint publication of the complete works of Marx and Engels (MEGA) by the Institutes for Marxism-Leninism at the Central Committee of the CPSU and at the Central Committee of the SED.

In line with the new conditions and requirements the Marxist-Leninist parties of the socialist community had considerably expanded and deepened their multi- and bilateral cooperation since the beginning of the seventies. A comprehensive system of cooperation, of the exchange of opinions and experience and of the synchronization and coordination of strategy and policy came into being. The most important place in this was held by the regular direct contacts between the leading representatives of the parties both at multilateral and bilateral level. Thus 20 meetings between Erich Honecker and L. I. Brezhnev took place between the 8th Congress of the SED and May 1976. Members and alternate members of the Politbureau and the Central Committees of the SED and the CPSU as well as members of their staffs held many working meetings. Relations between county organizations of the SED and union republic or area organizations of the CPSU expanded considerably. Cooperation between the two parties developed on the basis of long-term joint plans.

The centre of the stage of cooperation was occupied by the multifarious problems which had arisen out of the new stage of socialist construction in both countries, from the development of the socialist community and in the foreign policy sphere. The SED and the CPSU paid particular attention to the concentration of the material, scientific and cultural potentials of the two countries.

The SED also expanded and intensified its cooperation with its fraternal parties in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, Poland, Hungary and other socialist countries. Direct contacts between government departments, public organizations, enterprises, schools and scientific and cultural institutions also increased. This in turn led to personal encounters and friendly contacts between millions of citizens of socialist countries.

The great progress made by the GDR and the USSR

since the beginning of the seventies and the new dimensions in collaboration between the two countries and the Marxist-Leninist parties as well as the significant changes which had taken place throughout the world and in Europe, made it both possible and necessary to create a new contractual basis for the fraternal alliance. On 7 October 1975 Erich Honecker and L. I. Brezhnev signed a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Moscow. This treaty forms a basis in international law for the long-term cooperation between both countries well into the 21st century. It takes care of all essential elements of mutual relations and assures sure prospects for the GDR on the road of socialism and communism. It is also one of the treaty's aims to bring the socialist states and nations even closer together. It is in line with the basic interests of the entire socialist community and serves its further consolidation.

The new Treaty of Friendship and Assistance mirrors the GDR's position in the world at large as a sovereign socialist state which exists within recognized and secured boundaries under international law and which conducts an active policy of peace and peaceful coexistence as a member of the socialist community. It bars the way to all aggressive and revanchist plans against the GDR.

## 5. The world-wide recognition of the GDR

At the beginning of the seventies efforts to bring about a turn from the imperialist cold war to international détente were successful, particularly in Europe. The Soviet Union's consistent peace policy and the joint coordinated actions of the socialist countries had the lion's share in this development.

In September 1971 representatives of the USSR, the USA, Britain and France signed the Quadripartite Agreement on West Berlin in which the four countries committed themselves to promote the elimination of tension in this area and to settle matters in dispute exclusively

by peaceful means. The Western powers confirmed that West Berlin did not constitute a part of the FRG and that it would not, as before, be governed by it. Two months later representatives of the GDR and the FRG signed an agreement on transit traffic between the FRG and West Berlin which was followed by an accord between the GDR and the West Berlin Senate on travel and visitor traffic.

The settlement of questions affecting West Berlin not only brought significant progress in one of the most complicated problems of European post-war development. The Western powers and the FRG, by signing the agreement, also for the first time recognized the existence of the GDR as a sovereign state in terms of international law.

In spite of continuing resistance on the part of forces hostile to détente in the FRG, which were largely concentrated in the CDU and CSU, these agreements, as well as the treaties signed with the FRG by the USSR and Poland in August and December 1970, came into force in June 1972. After protracted negotiations between the plenipotentiary of the GDR, Michael Kohl and his FRG counterpart Egon Bahr, the Treaty on the Basic Principles of Relations between the GDR and the FRG was signed in Berlin on 21 December 1972. It regulates the relations between the GDR and the FRG as two sovereign, equal and mutually independent states in keeping with the principles of peaceful coexistence between states with different social orders. Both countries based themselves on the fact that neither can represent the other internationally or act in its name. In the treaty signed with Czechoslovakia in 1973 the FRG was compelled to recognize the nullity of the 1938 Munich agreement thereby accepting the inviolability of the frontiers of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.

The system of treaties created between 1970 and 1973 signified the binding recognition, in terms of international law, of the results of the Second World War and of the realities which had come into being in Europe in its aftermath, and particularly of the inviolability of the frontiers,

including those of the GDR. It made an essential contribution to the normalization of relations between countries with opposing social orders. The treaties brought about more favourable external conditions for the further construction of socialism and communism in the countries of the socialist community.

The changes for the better on the European continent were intimately connected with the world-wide recognition of the GDR as a sovereign state. The GDR was admitted to UNESCO in November 1972 and became a UN member on 18 September 1973. The GDR participated on a basis of equality in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe whose first phase had started at Helsinki in July 1973. The Bucharest meeting of the Warsaw Treaty states had called for the convening of a conference of this kind in 1966.

During the first year of its existence the GDR had been recognized diplomatically by 11 socialist countries. Between 1957 and 1971 two socialist countries and 17 newly emergent nations established diplomatic relations with it. The decisive break-through came in 1972 and 1973. In these two years the GDR was recognized by 70 countries, among them India in October 1972 and Great Britain and France in February 1973. In September 1974 the GDR and the USA established diplomatic relations. 1974, the 25th year of its existence, saw the GDR recognized diplomatically by more than 100 countries.

With admission to UNO and the establishment of diplomatic relations with almost all countries in the world the over 20-year struggle of the socialist community and of all anti-imperialist forces for recognition of the GDR as an independent and sovereign country under international law and for its participation, on a basis of full equality, in international life, found its successful conclusion. The diplomatic blockade of the GDR organized by the USA, the FRG and their allies and the Hallstein Doctrine proclaimed for this purpose collapsed just as much as the FRG claim to be the sole representative of all Germans. The foreign policy aims adopted at the 8th Congress of

the SED had proved to be realistic, and the struggle for their implementation had been crowned with success.

On 1 August 1975 Erich Honecker signed the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe on behalf of the GDR. The Final Act, for the first time in the history of the continent, represents an agreement by the highest representatives of 33 European countries and the USA and Canada on norms and principles governing the relations between the states participating and corresponding to the principles of international law and of peaceful coexistence between states with differing social orders. Of special significance was the recognition of the principles of sovereign equality, of the inviolability of frontiers, of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and of the renunciation of the threat or use of force. The favourable results of this conference opened up new prospects for the further struggle for peace and international détente.

For more than two decades imperialist world reaction had tried to "roll back" socialism. The elimination of the GDR had always been the primary objective of its policy of aggression. Particularly the ruling circles of the FRG, supported by the right-wing Social Democratic leaders, had always refused to accept the results of the Second World War and of post-war developments. They had used all means in their power in order to harm the GDR and its people, to discriminate against them and isolate them internationally, to do away again with the socialist political and social order and all revolutionary achievements of the working people. They had proclaimed bluntly that their aim was an imperialist German state within its pre-war frontiers and a "new order in Eastern Europe", i.e. a capitalist restoration in Poland, Czechoslovakia and other socialist countries.

The counter-revolutionary and aggressive cold war policy had poisoned international relations for more than two decades and had repeatedly exposed humanity to the danger of a nuclear war. Now the ruling circles of the USA, the FRG and other imperialist countries virtually had

to admit that their strategic concept had failed and that it had done so by virtue of the political, economic, military and ideological strength of the USSR and its socialist allies and of the unwavering struggle of all the forces of peace. Now the huge efforts paid off which the Soviet Union and its allies had made since the end of the Second World War to consolidate socialism and peace and to gain acceptance for the principles of peaceful coexistence in the relations between states with opposing social orders. The possibility that Europe, this most densely populated continent rich in tradition with its irreplaceable cultural values, the birthplace of the revolutionary workers' movement and of scientific socialism, the continent from which the Great October Socialist Revolution had started its triumphant advance but also the continent from which two devastating world wars had emanated, would now become a continent blessed with a secure peace—this was now within reach.

In other parts of the world, too, imperialist reaction suffered major defeats.

At the beginning of 1973 US imperialism was forced to discontinue its criminal war against the people of Vietnam. In the spring of 1975 the tyrannical US-supported régime in Saigon collapsed utterly and, with the proclamation of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in July 1976, the decade-long heroic liberation struggle of the Vietnamese people reached its climax. Laos and Kampuchea also achieved their independence. The victory of the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea finally put paid to the biggest military counteroffensive of the main imperialist power against the revolutionary forces after the Second World War. The imperialist "roll back" policy had also suffered a major defeat in South East Asia.

The many-faceted assistance and solidarity which the USSR and the other socialist countries, among them the GDR, had extended to the peoples of Indochina, had made a decisive contribution to these historic successes. The actions in support of Vietnam had developed into the largest and widest solidarity movement in the history of

the GDR. Under the slogan of "Solidarity now more than ever!" the SED called upon the people of the GDR to continue to support the Vietnamese people after the aggressors had been defeated and to help them in overcoming the burdensome heritage of the war and with socialist construction. Thanks to the solidarity of millions of working people, assistance to Vietnam was doubled between 1974 and 1975.

The GDR also extended active solidarity to the people of Chile in its struggle against the fascist junta which had overthrown the constitutional government of Popular Unity in the course of a counterrevolutionary military coup d'état in September 1973 which was to be followed by a campaign of murder against all anti-fascists.

The peoples of the Middle East also experienced the GDR's solidarity in their struggle against Israeli occupation, as did the peoples in Southern Africa oppressed by a barbarous racist régime, the people of Portugal which put an end in April 1974 to the oldest fascist dictatorship on European soil, and the national liberation movements in the former Portuguese colonies such as Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, and the peoples of Ethiopia, Guinea, Congo, Madagascar and other countries which chose the path of social progress in a hard struggle against internal and external reaction. Anti-imperialist solidarity on the part of the people of the GDR was also experienced by the representatives of 1,700 national and international organizations from 140 countries who assembled at the end of July and the beginning of August 1973 in Berlin on the occasion of the 10th World Festival of Youth and Students. The festival turned out to be the largest and most comprehensive manifestation of world youth for solidarity, peace and social progress.

The emerging process of détente in Europe, the victory of the people of Vietnam, the collapse of the last great colonial empire, the Portuguese, and many other events bore witness to the fact that the international balance of forces had fundamentally changed in favour of socialism and of all the anti-imperialist forces. However, the fascist



"Chile 1973", a poster by Felix Büttner

coup in Chile, the continued occupation of Arab territories by Israel and other acts of aggression by world reaction made it clear that the trend to reaction and aggression was still just as inherent in imperialism as ever. Hawkish NATO circles intensified the arms race and launched campaigns of slander against the socialist countries. They attempted to interpret the Helsinki Final Act, the Basic Treaty between the GDR and the FRG and the Quadripartite Agreement on West Berlin in a manner contradicting the meaning of these documents and to revive the failed policy of the cold war. Bourgeois and right-wing social democrat politicians and ideologues, particularly in the FRG, tried to use the process of détente in order to carry anti-communist and bourgeois nationalist ideas into the GDR and other socialist countries.

Sudden twists in international politics and a renewed threat to peace could therefore not be excluded. The USSR and the other members of the socialist community therefore made major efforts to deepen the process of détente, particularly in trying to supplement political détente with disarmament. They kept unwaveringly to the spirit and letter of the Helsinki Final Act and the system of treaties created at the beginning of the seventies. As the imperialist forces had not abandoned their hostile intentions towards socialism and had intensified the arms race, socialist society also had to see to it that the defence potential of the Warsaw Treaty alliance was assured. Led by the SED the National People's Army of the GDR carried out the decisions of the Committee of Defence Ministers on the development of the armed forces of the socialist military coalition. The SED laid more stress on defence requirements, particularly among the GDR's young generation. It stressed that the implementation of peaceful coexistence also implies constant vigilance and a readiness to defend socialist achievements against all assaults.

## 6. The continuing upswing of culture, education and science

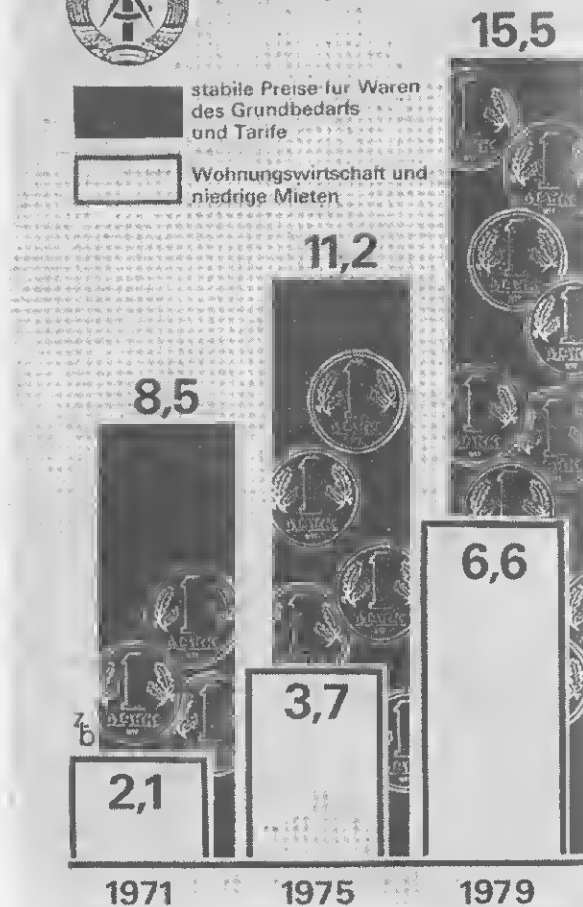
Basing itself on the decisions of the 8th Party Congress, the 6th session of the SED Central Committee held in July 1972 presented a long-term programme for the development of culture. The SED stressed that a high level of education and culture was a hallmark of developed socialism and that it was one of the preconditions for a later gradual transition to communism. It drew attention to the fact that what was at stake were cultured living and working conditions in their entirety, all material and spiritual values and the ideas and knowledge through whose appropriation people develop into socialist personalities. The Central Committee again stressed the major responsibility of the cultural community and called upon all party members working in cultural institutions to combine a principled approach with sensitivity towards the complicated problems forming part of creativity in culture.

The policy of the SED and government in the cultural sphere promoted a relationship of confidence between the party and the state and the great majority of artists and writers. This also proved to be a barrier to the many efforts of the FRG to retard the continuous development of the socialist national culture and to penetrate the GDR via the cultural sphere. Many new works came into being characterized by the ideas of socialist patriotism and proletarian internationalism and marked by realism and a concrete approach. The growing multiplicity of themes, genres, forms and individual styles were characteristic of them.

In literature, for example in novels and stories by Günter Görlich, Hermann Kant, Erik Neutsch and Brigitte Reimann, meditations on the responsibility and value of the individual moved increasingly into the centre of artistic endeavour, thus mirroring the growing significance of the subjective factor under socialism. Other literary works, such as those by Günter de Bruyn, Anna

## Leistungen aus gesellschaftlichen Fonds

in Milliarden Mark



Seghers and Erwin Strittmatter, reflected the process of attitude formation on the functions of art in society.

A large-scale effort to put into artistic form the many-layered relations between past and present and between the individual and society, was made by Jurij Brezan in his novel *Krabat oder die Verwandlung der Welt* (Krabat or the transformation of the world) which drew upon motifs from Sorb folk tales. Exceptional interest was aroused by the impressive literary testimonials to the antifascist resistance struggle, such as Ruth Werner's book *Sonja's Rapport* (Sonia's Report) or Hermann Kant's novel about the process of change which a young German underwent while a prisoner-of-war in Poland, entitled *Der Aufenthalt* (The Sojourn). The dramatist Peter Hacks wrote further plays in which lessons for the present were drawn from historical events, often through the adaptation of great works from antiquity. Rudi Strahl wrote contemporary comedies which ran to frequent performances. Numerous new talents announced their arrival. Almost every year saw the publication of first works by ten or twelve young authors.

A multiplicity of themes and forms and of individual forms of expression with a socialist content were also characteristic of numerous creations in the sphere of the visual arts as in Willi Sitte's worker personalities, the sculptures by Fritz Cremer, the portraits by Bernhard Kretschmar, Wolfgang Mattheuer, Curt Querner, the landscapes by Konrad Knebel, or the graphic works by artists of the younger generation such as Armin Münch and Ronald Paris. An increasing number of visual artists

Public spending (in 1 000 million marks)

	1971	1975	1979
Subsidies to peg prices of essential commodities, public transport, services, etc.	8.5	11.2	15.5
Housing management and rent subsidies	2.1	3.7	6.6

such as Bernhard Heisig and Werner Tübke created works depicting historical themes or, in the case of Lea Grundig, Harald Hackenbeck, Nuria Quevedo and Karl-Erich Müller, the theme of international solidarity.

Much attention continued to be paid to the cultivation of the cultural heritage and to international cultural exchange. Guest artists from 24 countries participated in the 4th International Bach Festival in Leipzig in 1976. The International Brecht Dialogue on Art and Politics took place in 1978 in celebration of the 80th anniversary of the poet's birth. The culture and art of the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community had long since found a firm place in the GDR's cultural life. Thus about a third of the contemporary plays produced originated in fraternal socialist countries, above all in the Soviet Union. Multilateral events such as the international art exhibition of socialist countries entitled „30 Victorious Years“ which had been shown in several countries during 1975 as well as the exhibition of crafts from socialist countries which took place in Erfurt in 1975 for the first time, proved themselves as popular as the festivals of the fraternal countries devoted to individual art genres. An important stage in the further deepening of cultural cooperation of the GDR with the fraternal countries was the arranging of long-term plans for cultural and scientific cooperation for the period 1976 to 1980 with the USSR, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, Mongolia, Poland and Hungary.

The shaping of an advanced socialist society and the related rise in the material and cultural standard of living as well as in education standards promoted the emergence of a broad spectrum of cultural needs among the working people. The appropriation of the cultural heritage and of the socialist national culture became a vital necessity of a growing number of citizens. Increasing numbers of workers, farmers and other working people were bringing an attentive, sophisticated and at the same time critical attitude to works of art.

In the mid-seventies about every fourth GDR citizen was

a regular borrower from the 13,000 state-run and trade union libraries. Although the GDR occupies a leading place in the world as far as the publication of books is concerned, it was not remotely possible to cater to the steadily growing demand, particularly as far as literary works were concerned. A similar situation prevailed with regard to gramophone records. With its 60 theatres performing on 110 stages the GDR is, in relation to its size and population, one of the countries most well-endowed with theatres. Twelve million people, more than half of them young people, visit theatres annually and 3 million are concert goers. The national art exhibitions held in Dresden record a steady increase in visitors. Whereas the 7th Art Exhibition held in 1972/73 showed an increase in attendance of 240,000 over its predecessor in 1967/68 (to reach a total of 656,000), the 8th Art Exhibition in 1977/78 for the first time attracted more than 1 million visitors, many of whom participated in the lively discussions on the works exhibited. The number of visitors frequenting the GDR's many well-stocked museums is also rising continually. It is by no means untypical that more than 50,000 people working in Dresden are in possession of annual tickets to the city's museums.

In the mid-seventies more than 80 per cent of all GDR households were in possession of television sets and almost all households had at least one radio. By offering a more varied fare the television service was making an effort to do justice to its very important place in shaping the consciousness of the people and at the same time catering better to the differentiated interests of the population.

Artistic creativity also bore witness to the breadth and variety of cultural life. During the first half of the seventies about 1.3 million people participated in the most varied artistic genres during their leisure. More than half a million of them were organized in 21,000 or so groups and circles. Choirs and song groups, orchestras and bands as well as circles for fine and applied arts had the largest permanent number of participants. The Workers' Festi-



vals, which up to 1972 were held annually and since then every other year, have developed into the largest cultural festivals of the working people.

Notwithstanding the progress recorded in cultural activities it had not yet been found possible to satisfy the many cultural needs of the people which had grown at an extraordinary pace. Thus the number of quality literary works and plays dealing with contemporary themes was as yet inadequate. The opportunities of making interesting use of leisure were still limited in many places, particularly for the up-and-coming generation. Another factor were the varying levels of cultural needs within the various classes and strata of the population. The task of developing a firm and durable attachment to culture on the part of all working people and of making the striving for education and knowledge and above all for creative cultural activities part of everyday life, continues to demand major efforts. This can only be solved over a fairly long period of time during which the necessary additional material conditions must also be provided.

In the field of education the setting up of ten-year comprehensive polytechnical schools was, in all essentials, completed following the 8th Congress of the SED. The target for 1975, i. e. the enrolment of 90 per cent of all pupils in the 9th and 10th grades, had already been achieved by 1973. The quality of education had improved as a result of the gradual introduction of new curricula since 1968. Multifarious relations developed between most schools and socialist enterprises. In the mid-seventies almost all 8th grade pupils participated in the *Jugendweihe*, a ceremony admitting young people to adulthood. In 1954 and 1955, when the *Jugendweihe* committees had been founded, only every fifth pupil had participated.

As for the seven universities, 54 colleges and 250 technical schools, the introduction of new and the consolidation of existing curricula and courses contributed to improving the quality of training and instruction available to the students. In 1975 there were, in the GDR, 81

students at universities and colleges and 93 at technical schools per 10,000 inhabitants. In 1960 the respective figures had been 58 and 73. Long-term blueprints were worked out for the more important areas of research at universities and colleges. By concentrating more strongly on specific social and economic areas the effectiveness of research was raised. The GDR's top educational institutions—which were also attended by numerous young people from friendly nations, including developing countries—were increasingly able to live up to their responsibility as political, ideological, scientific and theoretical centres in their respective territories.

Much progress was achieved in vocational training, the acquisition of additional skills, and further training of adults. Uniform training syllabi were either drawn up anew or brought up to date for 300 trades, among them 28 basic ones. A quarter of all workers participated in 1975 in training and further training. A firm place in the life of the GDR was gained by the Schools of Socialist Labour—an annual series of lectures for trade union members—which, closely related to practical reality, conveyed a basic knowledge of Marxism-Leninism as well as an understanding of economics and culture. The first Schools of Socialist Labour, based on the experience of the Soviet trade unions, were started in 1972 at the VEB Chemiekombinat Bitterfeld. By 1974 there were already 50,000 such institutions with more than a million participants.

The 8th Congress had stressed the important role of the sciences in the continuing development of advanced socialist society, particularly in implementing the central policy. At the initiative of the SED the funds for the promotion of science and technology were increased further. Between 1971 and 1973 more than 6,000 new developments in science and technology were introduced into production. Nevertheless the proportion of products representing a high level of science and technology still remained too small.

In 1974 the Politbureau of the SED Central Committee

adopted a document on the long-term development of basic research in the natural sciences and mathematics in the institutes attached to the GDR Academy of Sciences and the Ministry of Higher Education as well as a long-term concept for the development of the natural sciences and technology in important branches of the economy. The 16,000 odd members of the staff of the GDR Academy of Sciences, i. e. about 10 per cent of the country's academics, increased their efforts in order to make significant contributions to the GDR's scientific and technological advance and for the benefit of socialist economic integration. Cooperation with the Academy of Sciences of the USSR was being carried on increasingly on the basis of joint long-term programmes. The Soviet Science and Technology Week, which was held in Berlin for the first time in 1973, helped disseminate the latest findings of Soviet science.

Further progress was also recorded in social science research, teaching and propaganda. The GDR's social scientists produced text books, manuals and other publications on Marxist-Leninist philosophy, political economy, the history of the German people, and the confrontation with bourgeois ideology. They endeavoured to raise the theoretical level and effectiveness of their work. In this area too, collaboration with Soviet scientists became more intensive. New challenges arose following the accession of GDR scientists to international associations and organizations, a process which increased greatly after the world-wide recognition of the GDR.

The SED paid a great deal of attention to theoretical work and did much to promote it. It called upon the social scientists always to evaluate the thorough-going changes which take place as part of the continuing development of advanced socialism from the standpoint of Marxism-Leninism, to draw conclusions from it for further advances and look for answers to the new questions raised by the continuing development of society.

## 7. A successful period

The 1971-75 Five-Year-Plan, whose targets were realistic as well as ambitious, was fulfilled and in some significant aspects even overfulfilled. The national income produced increased by nearly a third in comparison to 1970, i. e. from 108,300 million marks to 141,000 million marks. The annual increase amounted to 5.4 per cent as opposed to the planned 4.5 per cent. The value of industrial production rose from 172,000 million marks in 1970 to 235,000 million marks. Annual growth came to 6.5 per cent as compared to a projected 5.9 per cent. Thus both the national income and industrial production recorded the highest growth rate of any Five-Year Plan to date. In 1976 the GDR's industrial production was double that of the former German Reich in 1936, this being achieved with but a quarter of the population.

A start was made in the course of the 1971-75 Five-Year-Plan on solving a number of economic problems which were now on the agenda. Among them were the further expansion of power generation, the continuous supply of raw and other materials to industry as well as the development of the supply industry and of construction. Thus the building industry's output between 1971 and 1975 was equivalent to that of the years between 1950 and 1964.

Production of plant and animal products was 11 per cent higher between 1971 and 1975 than during the preceding Five-Year-Plan. The yield in 1974 was almost 4 metric tonnes of grain per hectare, the highest since the foundation of the GDR. It was found possible to supply all the population's requirements in respect of basic food-stuffs except sugar, fruit, vegetables and some cereals.

As far as industry was concerned the structure was now thoroughly socialist. The combines had consolidated themselves and additional ones had been set up. About two-thirds of all workers and office employees in industry were working in plants employing more than 1,000 workers each. In agriculture too the process of socialization

and concentration of production made progress. The LPGs and VEGs and their cooperative institutions were proving themselves as modern socialist economic units. In 1975 there were 1,210 KAPs, i. e. units in which several LPGs or VEGs cooperated. They were now cultivating 85 per cent, and the LPGs and VEGs specializing in crop production a further five per cent of the land under cultivation of the socialist enterprises. On average KAPs had a membership of 260 farmers and workers working an area of 4,200 hectares.

The transition from the basically extensive to the largely intensive expansion of the economic potential had therefore been successfully concluded. Socialist production relations had been expanded, consolidated and were being used to the best advantage, while the material and technological basis of socialism had been expanded considerably. This made it clear that the continuing development of advanced socialist society was a dynamic process of thorough-going changes.

The GDR's total foreign trade turnover had increased by 75 per cent compared to the previous five-year period, and trade with the USSR and the other socialist countries recorded a rise of 83 per cent. Seventy per cent of the GDR's foreign trade was transacted with its CMEA partners. For the first time ever the turnover with them was in excess of 10,000 million roubles. Major projects were started in partnership with the Soviet Union and other CMEA member states, and coordination of plans with these countries for the years 1976 to 1980 was completed.

The emulation movement, led by the trade unions, had made a significant contribution to the fulfilment of the Five-Year-Plan. The number of people competing for the title „Collective of Socialist Labour”—a distinction awarded by the State—had risen from 2.5 million in 1970 to more than four million in 1975, and the number of innovators from 700,000 to 1.5 million.

The stable and continuous development of the socialist economy made it possible to implement the hitherto most

comprehensive social policy programme in the history of the GDR. The programme adopted by the 8th SED Congress calling for the provision of 500,000 dwellings by means of new construction or modernization was considerably exceeded, as in fact 609,000 units were completed. As a result the housing conditions of about 1.8 million people were improved. Two-thirds of the newly-built flats were allocated to workers' families. A total of 3.7 million working people received higher wages and the so far largest increases were awarded to pensioners. Much attention was paid to improving the living conditions of large families and working mothers. Visible progress was also recorded in supplying the population with goods and services. Retail turnovers increased by 28 per cent. The state made available considerable funds for education, health care and social services and to keep rents and retail prices stable. These and other improvements resulted in the growth of real incomes of the population, which rose by nearly one-third between 1970 and 1975.

The policy adopted by the 8th Congress of the SED had proved to be the right one. The advantages of socialism were coming to the fore more clearly than ever before. The successes must be seen as all the greater in view of the fact that they occurred against the background of additional burdens in foreign trade arising out of increased raw material prices and the effects of the economic crisis in the capitalist countries.

The continuing development of the GDR's advanced socialist society formed an integral part of the successful development of world socialism. During the first half of the seventies the strength and influence of world socialism grew to a greater extent than hitherto. The CMEA countries increased their industrial production by 45 per cent between 1971 and 1975, whereas the advanced capitalist countries had to be satisfied with a mere 9 per cent. As compared to an annual increase of 5 per cent in real incomes in the CMEA countries, there was actually a reduction in real incomes in numerous capitalist

countries as a result of inflationary price rises. In 1975 the number of unemployed reached the record level of 5 million in the European capitalist countries alone.

In 1975 the economic strength of the socialist community countries was more than twice that of the 1965 level. The CMEA countries, with but 9 per cent of the world's population, accounted for about 34 per cent of the world's industrial production. The largest social welfare programmes to that date had been started in all the countries of the socialist community. Sixty million people, i. e. a sixth of the then population of the countries then belonging to the CMEA, moved into new, modern dwellings during the 1971-75 Five-Year-Plan period.

Significant progress had been achieved by the CMEA countries in the transition to socialist economic integration. The integration of their national economies and of their economic, scientific and technological potentials proceeded apace. Their mutual trade turnover almost doubled between 1970 and 1975. Cultural exchanges and personal contacts between citizens of the socialist countries increased to a considerable extent.

In this fashion ever more common features emerged in the development of the socialist countries and peoples. Their gradual coming closer together could be observed ever more clearly. This is a long-term complicated process guided by the Marxist-Leninist parties. It encounters many new problems for whose solution experience must first be gathered. It is making steadily increasing demands on all the participating countries.

The 25th Congress of the CPSU, which was held from 24 February to 5 March 1976, was able to state that the influence of the socialist countries on world events was becoming ever stronger and more profound. It defined the new aims on the road of the further advance to communism, in the struggle for peace and security, and for the freedom and independence of nations. It described as a matter of first-rate importance to the socialist countries to keep on increasing their joint contribution to the

strengthening of peace through the constant strengthening of their unity and the all-round development of their cooperation.

#### 8. The 9th Congress. The new programme of the SED

The 9th Congress of the SED took place from 18 to 22 May 1976. For the first time it assembled in the newly-built Palace of the Republic in Berlin, which had been opened on 23 April.

At the time of the 9th Congress the SED united in its ranks more than 2 million members and candidate members. Of these 56.1 per cent were workers, 5.2 per cent cooperative farmers and 20 per cent members of the intelligentsia. In terms of social background almost 75 per cent of all members and candidate members were of working-class origin. Every third university and technical school graduate in the GDR was a member of the SED.

Erich Honecker presented the report of the Central Committee. He was able to state that the decisions of the 8th Congress had been translated into reality. The unity of the party, the working class and the people was firmer than ever before. The years which had passed since the last congress were amongst the GDR's most successful ones. However the continuing development of advanced socialist society had not been a process free of contradictions. All successes had been the result of hard work by the people under the leadership of the SED.

The Congress adopted the SED's new programme, basing itself on what had been achieved and on the newly-won perceptions and experiences of the USSR and other socialist countries. The programme aims to continue the development of advanced socialist society thus creating the basic preconditions for the gradual transition to communism. The setting of this goal was a far-reaching decision destined to be of lasting significance as far as the SED's general line was concerned. The programme

defined the essential characteristics and criteria of advanced socialist society and described its continuing development as a historical process of thorough-going political, economic, social and cultural change. It confirmed that the SED was guided in its entire activity by its desire to do everything for the prosperity of the people, for the interests of the working class and all other working people.

The programme combined the long-term decisions with concrete measures for the continuing development of advanced socialism, basing itself on the tried and tested principle of the unity of economic and social policy. The housing construction programme was described as the core of the SED's social policy. Depending on the speed of development of labour productivity—the most important source of economic growth—annual vacations were to be extended on a differentiated basis and the 40-hour week was to be introduced gradually by the reduction of the hours worked daily. The material and technological basis of the economy was to be expanded in such manner that the planned and dynamic growth of the productive forces was to be ensured. The chief method to be used in developing the GDR's economy was to be the intensification of social production, and the main factor in intensification was to be scientific and technological progress. The GDR's energy and raw material basis was to be expanded further under a long-term programme, although considerable funds were also to be allocated to the promotion of consumer goods production, services and trade. Agriculture was set the task of continuing to intensify production and of applying industrial-type production methods in order to ensure stable supplies and to bring rural living conditions in the villages closer to those in the towns.

The programme substantiates the thesis that the leading role of the working class and its Marxist-Leninist party as well as the significance of the trade unions will continue to increase in all spheres of the life of society as a whole during the continuing development of advanced

socialist society. The alliance of the working class with the cooperative farmers, the intelligentsia, craftsmen and traders is now, as heretofore, of undiminished significance. The gradual diminution of social differences between the classes and strata under the leadership of the party is described as a protracted and historically inevitable process which will result in the consolidation of the political and moral unity of the people and the continued unfolding of the socialist way of life.

The policy of the SED is directed to the further all-round strengthening of the socialist workers' and farmers' state as one of the forms of the dictatorship of the proletariat which represents the interests of the entire people of the GDR. The main direction in which socialist state power is moving is the continued development and perfection of socialist democracy. The SED confirmed that the successful cooperation with the allied parties and mass organizations in the Democratic Bloc and in the National Front was one of the principles of its policy of alliance. It stated that it would in future continue to devote a great deal of attention to the National Front as an all-embracing socialist popular movement.

The programme sets high goals regarding the development of science, education and socialist national culture. The SED uses its influence to ensure that the socialist way of life becomes increasingly dominant in all spheres of activity, whether at work or during leisure hours, in the collective or in personal conduct.

It is the main aim of SED foreign policy to ensure the most favourable international conditions for socialist and communist construction and to do so jointly with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. National defence of a high degree of effectiveness is also one of its preconditions.

The SED bases itself on the assumption that the GDR can only solve all its tasks in cooperation with the USSR and the other fraternal countries and as a firm component of the socialist community. It will continue to be a priority to further deepen comprehensive cooperation with

the CPSU and the Soviet Union. The SED sees one of its most important goals in the consistent intensification of socialist economic integration.

The 9th Congress adopted the Directives for the 1976-80 Five-Year-Plan. This made provision for increasing the produced national income by 27 to 30 per cent as compared to 1975 and industrial production by 34 to 36 per cent. The growth rate in exports, especially those to socialist countries, was to rise considerably faster than production. The Directives also provided for the continued improvement of the material and cultural standard of living of the population. 750,000 dwellings, both newly-built and modernized, were to be provided by 1980, thereby improving housing conditions for 2.2 million people. Real incomes per head of the population were to be increased by 21 to 23 per cent. Large funds were made available for the continued rebuilding of Berlin as the political, economic and cultural centre of the country.

The Congress adopted the new Constitution of the SED which drew the party members' attention more strongly to the new responsibilities arising out of the continuing development of advanced socialist society.

The Central Committee elected by the Congress chose Erich Honecker as General Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED. The following were elected members of the Politbureau: Hermann Axen, Friedrich Ebert, Werner Felfe, Gerhard Grüneberg, Kurt Hager, Heinz Hoffmann, Erich Honecker, Werner Krolkowski, Werner Lamberz, Erich Mielke, Günter Mittag, Erich Mückenberger, Konrad Naumann, Alfred Neumann, Albert Norden, Horst Sindermann, Willi Stoph, Harry Tisch, Paul Verner. The alternate members chosen were: Horst Dohlius, Joachim Herrmann, Werner Jarowinsky, Günther Kleiber, Egon Krenz, Inge Lange, Margarete Müller, Gerhard Schürer, Werner Walde.

With the programme adopted by the 9th Congress, the Act supplementing and amending the Constitution (which was promulgated on the 25th anniversary of the founding of the GDR), and the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation

with the USSR signed a year later, the people of the GDR are in possession of three basic documents laying down the main directions of home and foreign policy in the long term. They express the GDR's communist perspective, its firm entrenchment in the socialist community and the indestructible alliance with the USSR.

#### 9. Continuing the implementation of the central policy

The elections to the People's Chamber and to the county assemblies in October 1976 were convincing proof of confidence in the policy of the SED and of the socialist state. Of the 500 deputies elected to the People's Chamber 127 belonged to the SED, 52 each to the CDU, DBD, LDPD, and NDPD, 68 to the FDGB, 40 to the FDJ, 35 to the DFD and 22 to the League of Culture. The People's Chamber elected the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED, Erich Honecker, as Chairman of the Council of State, and Horst Sindermann President of the People's Chamber. Willi Stoph was appointed Chairman of the Council of Ministers. Erich Honecker stressed the determination of the party and State leadership to continue consistently the policy which had proven itself in the past.

In order to gradually implement this programme directed at the achievement of growth, prosperity and stability, it was in the first place necessary to ensure the continuing growth of the socialist economy. During the first three years of the 1976-80 Five-Year-Plan the proportionate targets were fulfilled in the major categories and to some extent overfulfilled. Industrial production rose as planned. The national income produced in 1978 amounted to 161,000 million marks. This represented an increase of 47 per cent since 1970. In 1979 around 90 per cent of industry's increased labour productivity was the result of the more comprehensive use of science and technology.

The development of the existing combines and the setting up of new ones proved to be the most important step in perfecting management and planning. By the end of 1980 in centrally managed industry and in construction there were 129 combines all of which, apart from a few exceptions, managed enterprises in these spheres. They employed almost 2.5 million workers, i. e. 91 per cent of those engaged in the particular branch of industry. Around 90 per cent of industry's research and development potential was concentrated in the combines. The combines' share in industrial production increased to 88 per cent.

The combines have every opportunity of achieving major successes in the intensification drive. Among the most successful of them are to be found the VEB Carl Zeiss Jena, the Petrolchemisches Kombinat Schwedt, Robotron and the Fritz Heckert Werkzeugmaschinenkombinat at Karl Marx Stadt.

The SED paid a great deal of attention to the development of the combines. It stressed that this was a profound economic and political process and by no means merely an organizational change. The combines made it possible to organize socialist economic activity comprehensively in the very place where the process of reproduction takes place. The party saw to it that the experience acquired by the most efficient combines was thoroughly assessed.

The setting up of consultation centres also made a contribution to generalizing the experiences of the top enterprises. The product groups which unite within their ranks enterprises producing similar products but which in some cases are attached to different combines, also proved themselves as forms of cooperation and for the exchange of experience.

Those working in agriculture also achieved major plan targets. Their efforts were directed particularly to increasing the share of domestic output in agricultural products. The State made available substantial sums of money in order to continue the expansion of the material

and technical basis of agriculture. The continuing revolution in the GDR's agriculture which increasingly went in for industrial-type methods of production, made growing demands on management and organization at all levels. The LPG's and VEG's, together with their cooperative institutions, proved themselves as enterprises with a growth potential for the intensification of production and for the perfecting of socialist production relations in a planned fashion.

It was found possible to ensure continuous economic growth notwithstanding the deteriorating situation in the foreign trade sphere. Thus raw material prices continued to rise by leaps and bounds on the world market. The continuing crisis and the sharp competition in the capitalist countries resulting from it rendered exports more difficult. To this had to be added the fact that the GDR, like other countries of the socialist community, had to accommodate itself to the fact that some prices prevailing in the CMEA had to be adjusted to those on the world market. Greater demands were also made on the GDR as a result of its participation in joint ventures under the auspices of the CMEA.

The socialist emulation campaign launched on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the GDR made a special contribution to the stable continuous development of the economy. The campaign exceeded all previous efforts of this nature in scope and intensity and was run under a tried and true slogan calling for the utmost use to be made of every mark, hour and ounce of material. Numerous collectives concentrated their efforts on speeding up the practical application of science and technology. In turn they set themselves the objective of increasing output and of producing more high-quality consumer goods and export-quality products.

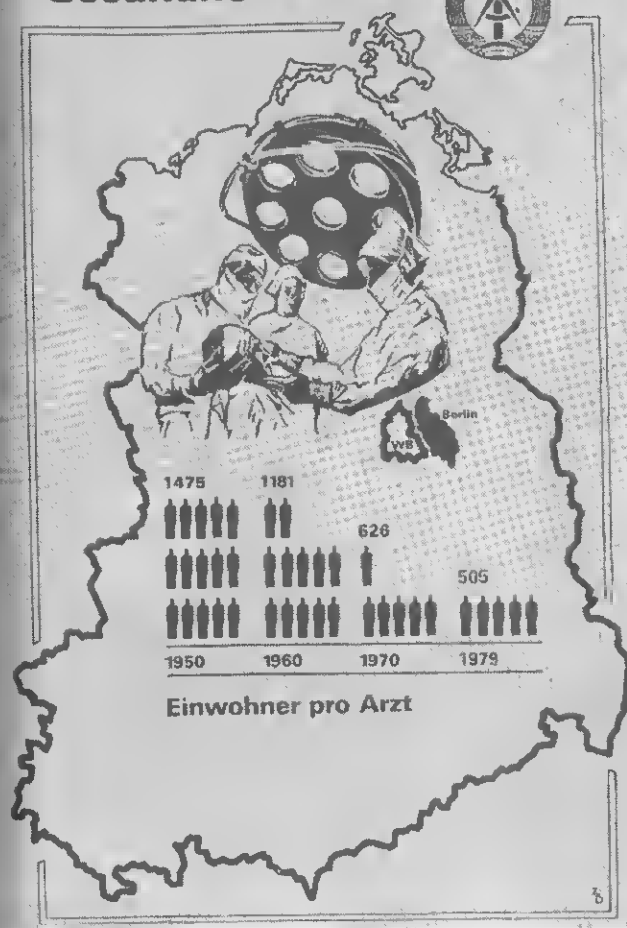
The application of Soviet innovators' methods, such as the Zlobin method and the Basov initiative were of major benefit. GDR's workers' initiatives also proved themselves. Among them were to be found personal and collective creative plans to increase labour productivity,

notes on the plan, and experimental shifts. New forms of emulation became popular, e. g. the complex emulation drives which comprised tasks ranging from research and development through production to sales. They led to particularly good results with new products and technological processes. Preliminary experience was acquired in the organization of complexes in which Academy institutes and industry participated and in the implementation of joint emulation programmes by industrial enterprises and research institutions.

The young generation produced outstanding results in the campaign launched in late 1977 by the FDJ Central Council in the run-up to the GDR's 30th anniversary. The principle of assigning concrete tasks and responsibilities to the young generation, for example the FDJ's "Berlin Initiative" in which some 12,000 young building workers from all the GDR's counties participated in 1979, the FDJ campaign to use raw materials sparingly and the FDJ campaign to modernize and extend dwellings. All these efforts resulted in considerable economic gains. Youth work teams, whose number more than doubled between 1971 and 1979, had a considerable share in this.

The results achieved should be all the more appreciated on account of the fact that highly unfavourable weather conditions at the beginning of 1979 caused damage to the extent of 10,000 million marks. Thanks to the exemplary efforts of millions of working people and the disinterested activity of members of the GDR's armed forces and of Soviet Army units stationed in the GDR the damage caused was redressed rapidly and the stable fulfilment of the Plan was ensured. In order to raise national income it is first of all necessary to intensify production faster and more comprehensively than hitherto, to increase the economic efficacy of science and technology still further, to promote socialist rationalization systematically, and particularly to reduce the consumption of raw and other materials and energy. To put it in a nutshell, the growing demands make it essential to improve the quality and efficiency of labour faster and on a bigger scale.

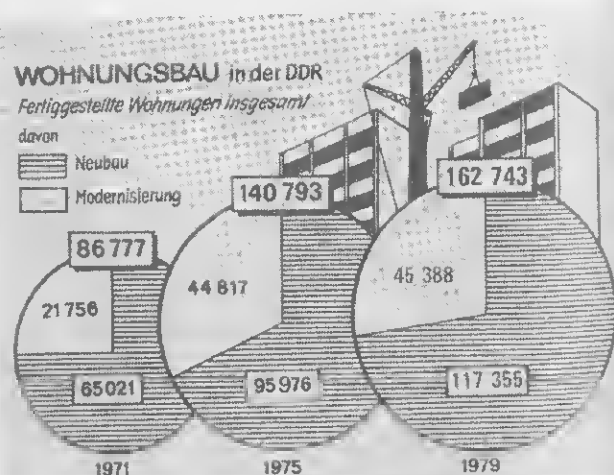
## Gesundheitswesen



Health services		Inhabitants per doctor	
1950	1960	1970	1979
1,475	1,181	626	505



The efforts made by the workers, the cooperative farmers, the members of the intelligentsia and all other working people made it possible to continue the implementation of the central policy with its unity of social and economic policy and to continue the planned improvement of the working and living conditions of the people. The joint decision of the SED Central Committee, the National Executive of the FDGB and the Council of Ministers on the continuation of the social policy programme for 1976–80 was published on 27 May 1976, immediately after the 9th Congress of the SED. It provided for comprehensive wage and pension increases and for longer annual leaves.



Housing construction in the GDR

	1971	1975	1979
Dwellings completed			
Total	86,777	140,793	162,743
New construction	65,021	95,976	117,355
Modernization	21,756	44,817	45,388

In 1976 alone the living conditions of 5.6 million working people were improved noticeably on the basis of this decision. The average monthly income of workers and office employees working in nationally-owned enterprises rose from 762 marks in 1970 to approximately 1,000 marks in 1979. Pensions, which had been increased since 1972, were now raised to the extent that they resulted in the largest increment to date in the incomes of elderly people. The social funds whose purpose is, among other things, the retention of stable retail prices, service charges and rents rose from 25,600 million marks in 1970 to 48,800 million marks by 1978. Maternity leave was extended from 18 to 26 weeks. As of 1 January 1979 all working people had their annual leave extended by at least three days. Annual leave for about 940,000, primarily shift workers, young people and apprentices, was increased by four to six days.

The housing construction programme was implemented according to plan. On 6 July 1978 the millionth dwelling to be completed since 1971 was handed over in Marzahn, a Berlin borough. Since the 8th Congress of the SED the annual output of newly-built or modernized flats has more than doubled. Between 1971 and 1979 1,254,000 dwellings, including 840,000 newly-built ones, have been occupied, thus improving housing for 3.5 million people. During the same period an increasing number of culturally valuable edifices were restored in Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig and other towns.

The appearance of many small towns and villages also underwent increasing changes. New suburbs and shopping centres came into being. Architecturally attractive old buildings were restored and very often up-to-date apartments are to be found behind their facades. Parks, playgrounds and small sports grounds were frequently laid out as part of a campaign calling upon citizens to help make towns and villages more attractive. The activity of the village associations made a special contribution to this. These proved themselves as a form of cooperation in the interests of the people between the elected bodies

and all public organizations in the respective area, including nationally-owned plants and LPGs. There were, in 1978, over 700 such associations whose membership consisted of more than two-thirds of all towns—as a rule those with up to 20,000 inhabitants—and villages.

As far as the number of dwellings per 1,000 inhabitants is concerned the GDR is already better off now than developed capitalist countries such as the FRG, France and Great Britain. Nevertheless major efforts continue to be necessary in order to solve the housing question as a social problem and, in particular, in order to overcome historically determined social and territorial discrepancies in regard to housing.

The living conditions of the people were also improved as a result of far-reaching measures for the protection of the natural environment. Thus about 14,000 hectares of worked-out lignite mining areas were reclaimed on the basis of long-term schemes. As a result not only areas useful to agriculture and forestry came into being, but also recreation areas such as the Senftenberger See, the Knappensee near Hoyerswerda, the Helenensee near Frankfurt-on-Oder and the Kulkwitzer See near Leipzig.

The fact that the policy of the SED and of the socialist State has as its aim the prosperity of the people was also expressed in the GDR's new Labour Code which came into force on 1 January 1978. It is a further development of the right to work which is guaranteed in the GDR and which is a basic human right.

#### **10. In alliance with the USSR for the continued strengthening of the socialist community, for peace and collective security**

After the 9th Congress the GDR reinforced its efforts on the international scene with the aim of further consolidating the alliance with the USSR and the other socialist countries, of making a contribution to international détente, and of developing cooperation with all anti-imperialist forces.

Of service to the close collaboration among the friendly socialist states and peoples in all spheres of life of society as a whole and in foreign policy were the treaties on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance concluded in 1977 with Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Mongolia, Poland and Hungary, the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation with Vietnam, the Declaration on the Deepening of Friendship between the GDR and Romania, as well as numerous meetings of leading representatives of the fraternal countries. Tasks connected with socialist economic integration occupied a central position in the new treaties of friendship and mutual assistance, the "third generation" of treaties between socialist countries. It is the aim of the treaties to unite and expand the material and intellectual potential of the participating countries for the good of each of them and of the socialist community as a whole.

The GDR made its contribution to the work of the CMEA and its bodies. The CMEA, following the admission of Vietnam in June 1978, has ten members with a population of some 420 million people. The 32nd Council Meeting in June 1978 adopted three long-term programmes for ensuring supplies of raw materials and fuels, for the development of machine building and for agriculture. All these domains are of great significance for the economies of the CMEA countries as a whole. Major exertions are being made to implement the programme.

The GDR participated in the measures taken by the socialist community in support of Vietnam, Ethiopia, Angola, Afghanistan, Laos, Kampuchea, Nicaragua and other countries in overcoming the onerous consequences of imperialist aggression, colonial exploitation and suppression. In 1979 the GDR concluded treaties of Friendship and Cooperation with the People's Republics of Angola and Mozambique, Socialist Ethiopia and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, and in 1980, with the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the Republic of Cuba. The GDR is continuing to exercise active solidarity with all anti-imperialist forces and strengthened its co-

operation with developing countries. Its exports to these countries showed a considerable increase. The GDR condemned imperialist interference in Africa. It reaffirmed its point of view that the continuing tensions in the Middle East could only be eliminated if the UN decisions on the Israeli withdrawal from all areas occupied since 1967 were carried out as an organic part of ensuring the national rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including its right to set up its own state, and of the independence and security of all countries in this region.

The SED developed many initiatives for the development of cooperation with the communist parties and other progressive forces and organizations in the capitalist countries. The SED contributed to the preparation and carrying out of the conference of 29 European communist and workers' parties which took place in the GDR's capital in June 1976. It looked upon the unanimously adopted document styled "For Peace, Security, Cooperation and Social Progress" as proof of the fact that the interests of the working class of all European countries and its communist parties coincide on all basic questions. The differing conditions under which the parties are working and the differing opinions resulting therefrom regarding some questions proved to be no obstacle to their still closer cooperation in the struggle for the basic aims common to the communist movement.

The freeing of Luis Corvalán, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Chile, who had been imprisoned since 1973, was a victory of international solidarity. The fascist junta was forced to agree to this in December 1976 in the face of a world-wide protest movement. As in so many other countries, the steadfast Communist and patriot Luis Corvalán was also given an enthusiastic reception in the GDR when he visited the republic at the beginning of 1977.

A central position in the GDR's foreign policy continued to be occupied by the struggle for peace and security and for the peaceful coexistence of states with differing social orders. The GDR supported the proposal,

advanced at the Bucharest meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty states of November 1976, to the effect that all states which had participated in the European security conference should undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and that they should prohibit the development of new weapons of mass destruction and reduce arms expenditure and armed forces. These and other initiatives of the Warsaw Treaty states aimed at supplementing political with military détente. The GDR played an active role in the preparation and carrying out of the Belgrade follow-up meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1977. In spite of a powerful counter-attack by forces hostile to détente in the NATO countries, which came out against the principles of peaceful coexistence and which attempted to discredit the socialist community by means of a demagogic "human rights" campaign, the follow-up meeting confirmed the importance of the Helsinki Final Act as détente's basic document.

To continue the implementation of this Final Act the GDR had by the end of 1978 concluded about 90 agreements with capitalist states which had participated in the security conference. The signing of a government protocol on the completion of the demarcation of the state frontier between the GDR and the FRG in November 1978 and of other important agreements with the FRG on traffic and other issues, confirmed that complicated problems can be settled peacefully provided there is full respect for sovereignty and no interference takes place.

At the same time the GDR had to take into account the fact that the international class confrontation had become significantly tougher and more complicated because the NATO powers were concentrating on the arms drive and the introduction of new weapons of mass destruction while also intensifying the ideological struggle. The long-term programme adopted by the NATO Council in May 1978 is the most comprehensive attempt to date to change the military balance, particularly in Europe, in

favour of the imperialist powers. The NATO manoeuvres which took place in the autumn of 1978, particularly in the FRG, and which exceeded all their predecessors in scope, were meant to demonstrate the possibility of launching a surprise attack against the socialist community. The preparations to commit acts of aggression were carried out under the guise of the lie of a „threat from the East“ while at the same time all disarmament proposals submitted by the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries were rejected.

Thus the international situation is marked by the interlocking of two contradictory tendencies: international détente and the NATO policy hostile to it. Under these circumstances the struggle against the arms race, for which imperialism is solely responsible, is the main link in the chain of the international class confrontation.

The GDR, together with the Soviet Union and the other socialist community countries, unwaveringly stands for the implementation of the far-reaching proposals of the Moscow meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty states held in November 1978. It is in favour of the commencement of negotiations for the discontinuance of production of all types of nuclear weapons and on the gradual reduction of nuclear weapons stocks up to and including their complete liquidation. The GDR, like the other socialist community states, is prepared to reduce stocks of all types of weapons on the basis of the principle of equal security for all countries. It demands that armed forces be not increased in size and that the use of force be renounced on a world-wide basis. It is of particular urgency to prevent the production and deployment of new American nuclear missiles on the territory of the FRG and other European NATO countries.

The unanimity with which the people of the GDR supports the peace policy of its state was borne out by a Declaration of Support for terminating the arms race and for securing peace which was signed in October 1979 by more than 13 million people, i. e. 96 per cent of all GDR citizens over the age of 14.



Specialists from the GDR and the USSR constructing the reactor of the Nord nuclear power station



The 8th SED Congress in Berlin's Werner Seelenbinder Halle,  
June 1971



The prototype of a container terminal unit manufactured by VEB  
Verlade- und Transportanlagen Leipzig and destined for the USSR  
A chemical reactor from Czechoslovakia arriving at the Piesteritz  
nitrogen plant



Young Pioneers and FDJ members at Neustrelitz collecting waste material, the proceeds going to embattled Vietnam  
An expression of solidarity by workers at Hettstedt



The 1973 World Festival in Berlin  
A mass rally in solidarity with the fighting people of Chile, Berlin  
14 September 1973



Young innovators' fair, 1973

Political education classes at the S. M. Kirov engineering plant in Leipzig



Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the SED Central Committee and Chairman of the GDR Council of State, in conversation with Prof. Hermann Klare, President of the GDR Academy of Sciences. Seen on the right is Kurt Hager, member of the Politbureau and Secretary of the SED Central Committee

7th Writers' Congress, Berlin, November 1973





14th Maritime Week at Ueckermünde, August 1978. Ships of the Baltic Red Banner Fleet, the Polish Navy and the People's Navy of the GDR in port.

Welding work on the Druzhba pipeline



Meeting in the Crimea 1980





After the signing of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the GDR and the USSR, Moscow, 7 October 1975



9th SED Congress at the Palace of the Republic, Berlin, May 1976. Erich Honecker and heads of delegations from socialist countries strolling through the main foyer (above)



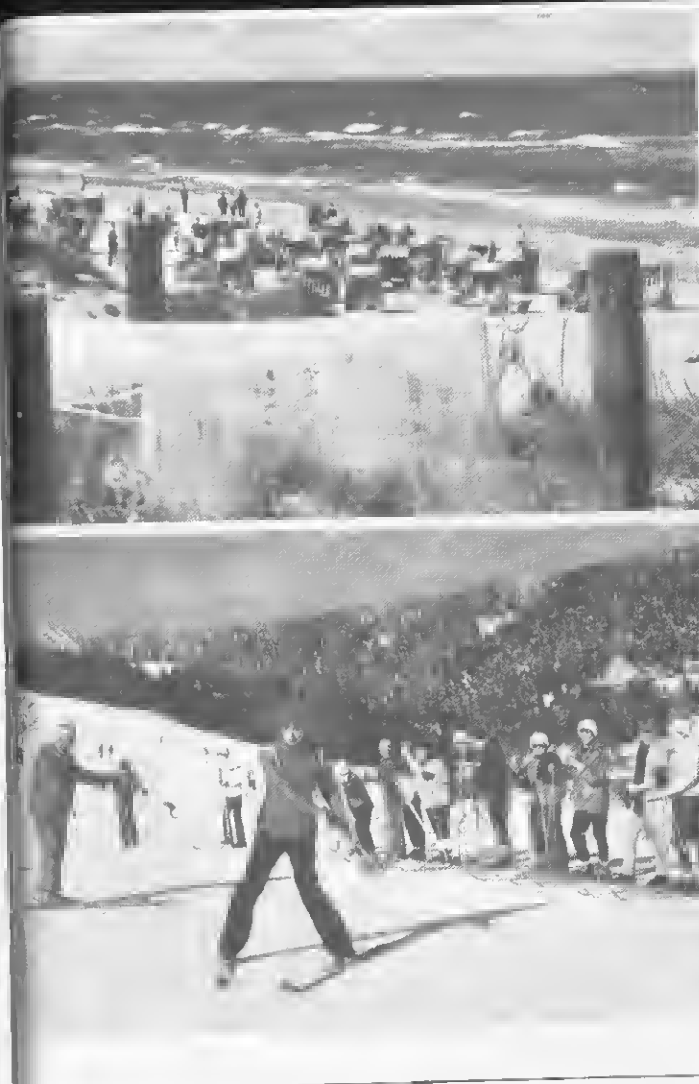
Shop stewards' meeting at the Wohnungsbaukombinat Berlin  
The millionth new home built in the GDR since 1971 is handed over at Berlin-Marzahn, 6 July 1978



Cosmonauts Sigmund Jähn and Valeri Bykovski are given a hero's welcome by Berliners, 21 September 1978



Morning concert in the Palace of the Republic



Holidays on the Baltic  
Holidays in the mountains



The working people of the GDR capital filing past the Socialist Memorial at Berlin-Friedrichsfelde, 14 January 1979

The people of the GDR is of course aware of the fact that the struggle against the imperialist arms policy is bound to be a very long and complicated one because basic class interests and aims of monopoly capital are at stake here. It is being made more difficult as a result of the great power chauvinist policy of the present Peking leadership which is stirring up areas of conflict throughout the world and making relentless efforts to build up an aggressive anti-Soviet bloc together with the most reactionary imperialist forces. Nevertheless the struggle for peace and coexistence and against the imperialist arms drive can now be conducted under more favourable conditions thanks to the continuing change of the world balance of forces in favour of socialism. The progress recorded in the sphere of political détente and the growing understanding, in capitalist countries as well, that there is no alternative to peaceful coexistence, is creating increasing opportunities for deepening political détente and gradually supplementing it with its military counterpart.

At the same time the protection of peace and of the socialist achievements continue to require a high level of military preparedness. The GDR's armed forces therefore reliably fulfilled their obligations as an ally in the Warsaw Treaty organization. In October 1978 the People's Chamber adopted the new National Defence Act which replaced its predecessor dating back to 1961. The legal regulations applicable to national defence, including civil defence, were brought into line with the Constitution of 1974. The Act took account of both practical and theoretical considerations as well as the needs of the present and of the foreseeable future. It expressed the fact that the securing of peace is the basic question in international politics and that the GDR steadfastly supports this.

Developments since the 9th Congress have again confirmed that the fraternal alliance with the Soviet Union is the basis for all successes in the further development of advanced socialist society and in the struggle for peace. Economic agreements concluded with the USSR secured

a successful start of the 1976—80 Five-Year-Plan. The GDR transacts more than a third of its entire foreign trade with the Soviet Union. Of particular significance were not only the extensive supplies of raw materials forming part of this agreement, but also imports of foodstuffs and consumer goods. Among other things the USSR supplies 100 per cent of the GDR's natural gas, more than 90 per cent of its fuel oil, timber and cotton needs as well as 60 to 70 per cent of its iron ore and the most important non-ferrous metals. Of major importance for the future is the programme on specialization and cooperation of the GDR and Soviet economies for the period from 1980 to 1990. This is coordinated with the CMEA's long-term programmes, its aim being the continued integration of the two countries' economies.

On the threshold of the GDR's 30th anniversary two events above all bore witness to the close fraternal alliance between the Soviet Union and the GDR and to the new dimensions of their cooperation.

From 26 August to 3 September 1978 the first joint manned space flight of the two countries took place. The GDR's first cosmonaut, Lieut.-Col. Sigmund Jähn, honourably fulfilled his task together with his Soviet comrade, Col. Valeri Bykovsky within the framework of the Interkosmos programme. Thus a citizen of the GDR, son of a worker and Communist, was the first German to fly into outer space. High-quality equipment developed in the GDR, such as the MKF 6 multi-spectral camera produced by VEB Carl Zeiss Jena also proved their worth during this undertaking.

The enthusiastic reception which the people of the GDR gave to both cosmonauts during a trip they made through the GDR in September, showed that the joint space flight was looked upon as a new high-water mark in the fraternal relations between the GDR and the USSR and being celebrated as such.

The joint enterprise clearly demonstrated the high level of science and technology under socialism and in particular the USSR's tremendous economic and scientific po-

tential which is also of immediate benefit to the GDR. It became clear once again that the alliance with the Soviet Union and a firm place in the socialist community result in increased opportunities for every single country and that they have a considerable share in bringing out more and more the advantages and potential inherent in socialism in a more all-embracing fashion.

At the beginning of October 1978 work was concluded on the hitherto largest youth project of the GDR, the Druzhba pipeline. During the four years of work, which demanded skill, courage and also the readiness to make sacrifices, 10,300 workers—among them 6,300 young people and members of the FDJ—had laid a 268-kilometre pipeline into the earth and had moved 8 million cubic metres of soil. They gained valuable experience and knowledge in close contact with members of the Leninist Komsomol and proved themselves as revolutionaries of our time. The joint construction of the Soyuz natural gas pipeline by several fraternal socialist countries is making an essential contribution to the expansion of their energy and raw material supplies. It is proof of the enormous potential which socialist economic integration is capable of mobilizing.

#### 11. The 30th anniversary of the GDR

On 7 October 1979 the people of the GDR celebrated the 30th anniversary of the founding of their State. Millions of citizens manifested their loyalty to their socialist homeland. Leading personalities of friendly socialist countries, such as L. I. Brezhnev, Gustav Husák, János Kádár, Todor Zhivkov and Yumjaagiyn Tsendenbal participated in the celebrations in Berlin. Celebrations took place in more than 120 towns in the Soviet Union. The numerous societies of friendship with the GDR also commemorated the day.

The people of the GDR and its many friends throughout the world had every reason to celebrate this day. "On the

The peace initiative which Leonid Brezhnev launched in Berlin during a speech given at a function marking the 30th anniversary of the GDR has met with a lasting response throughout the world. In the GDR, 13.1 million people, or 96 per cent of all citizens over the age of 14, signed a declaration of support which was handed to UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim in November 1979. It reads as follows:

"Our country, as well as all other peoples and states, are about to be effected by decisions of enormous significance.

"Speaking in Berlin, Leonid Brezhnev adopted a major initiative. By agreement with the GDR and the other Warsaw

Treaty states, the Soviet Union is unilaterally reducing its military forces in central Europe. It is also prepared to reduce the number of its medium-range missiles in the western areas of the country provided that no additional American medium-range missiles be deployed in Western Europe by NATO.

"When the safeguarding of peace is at stake, there should be no hesitation. We have not built up our country from ruins for it all to be reduced to ruins again. We support Leonid Brezhnev's peace initiative. Everywhere we need common sense and good will instead of arms madness and war policy. We demand:

"No new nuclear missiles in Western Europe, but steps towards disarmament!

"No arms race, but the continuation of détente!"

30th anniversary of the GDR," declared Erich Honecker, "it is clearer than ever that the founding of our socialist homeland marked a turning point in the history of the German people and of Europe. The course and results of the socialist revolution on German soil once again confirm the correctness and triumphant nature of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. It has become perfectly clear that our workers' and farmers' state is the guardian of the revolutionary traditions of the German working class and of the humanist heritage of the German people."<sup>35</sup>

Since the liberation from Nazism and the setting up of the workers' and farmers' state the life of the people of

## Bürger der DDR:

Zeichnet diesen Appell mit Eurem Namen!

Nationalrat der Nationalen Front der DDR

# Willenserklärung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik

Für unser Land, für alle Völker und Staaten, geht es um Entscheidungen von enormer Tragweite.

Von Berlin aus ergriff Leonid Breschnew eine große Initiative. Im Einvernehmen mit der DDR und den anderen Staaten des Warschauer Vertrages verringert die Sowjetunion einseitig ihre Streitkräfte in Mitteleuropa. Sie ist bereit, die Anzahl ihrer Mittelstreckenraketen in den westlichen Gebieten der UdSSR zu reduzieren – vorausgesetzt, daß durch die NATO in Westeuropa keine zusätzlichen amerikanischen Mittelstreckenraketen stationiert werden.

Wenn es um die Sicherung des Friedens geht, darf es kein Zögern geben. Wir haben unser Land nicht aus Ruinen aufgebaut, damit noch einmal alles in Trümmer sinkt. Was unser Fleiß schuf, darf nicht wieder zerstört werden. Wir unterstützen die Friedensinitiative Leonid Breschnews. Wir brauchen überall Vernunft und guten Willen statt Rüstungswahn und Kriegspolitik. Wir fordern:  
Keine neuen Atomraketen in Westeuropa – dafür Schritte zur Abrüstung!  
Kein Wettwüsten – dafür Fortsetzung der Entspannung!

Berlin, im Oktober 1979

the GDR has undergone a fundamental change for the better.

Although socialism has not yet surpassed the most developed capitalist countries with respect to the productivity of labour, it is already capable of ensuring an entirely new quality with regard to meeting the vital needs of the people. Socialism has already convincingly proved its superiority over capitalism in essential spheres of the life of society as a whole. It has eliminated the exploitation of man by man, and socialist production relations have come into being. In this manner a basic change has been initiated in human relations. The anarchy of



Situated as it is at the boundary of the two great social systems and the Warsaw Treaty and NATO alliances, the GDR's responsibility for contributing to the flourishing of socialism and the securing of peace is all the greater. It has done all in its power to live up to this responsibility.

The people of the GDR can justly be proud of what has been created and achieved in three decades through its collective efforts. This pride has nothing in common with the repulsive nationalist arrogance of those who—deaf to all the lessons of history—are still, or again, singing their "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles" and acting accordingly. As socialist patriots and internationalists the citizens of the GDR have no ambition either to stand above or below other nations. They combine pride in the successes of their own country with pride at what has been achieved in all the countries of the socialist community as well as with gratitude for the assistance and solidarity of the peoples of these countries and particular of the peoples of the Soviet Union.

Its achievements provide the GDR with certainty for the future but they turn it neither into a paradise in which one can get everything without working, nor into an idyll. Hardly a year after its founding the GDR's Prime Minister, Otto Grotewohl, declared: "... the state we have created is not a bed on which one can loll about ... The republic has come into being in the course of struggle, it is in the midst of a struggle now and will have to develop in the midst of struggle."<sup>36</sup> Now too, and in future, we shall have to struggle: to struggle for the comprehensive strengthening of the republic against imperialist threats of all kinds, to struggle for the solution of the new tasks that crop up in the course of social development, and to struggle at the side of all peace-loving and progressive forces throughout the world.

But the people of the GDR have created the foundations on which it is in principle possible to solve all problems affecting society as a whole, even the most difficult ones, some either today or in the near future, others in the longer term. The GDR does not have about it the antago-

nistic contradictions which were bound, sooner or later, to destroy all earlier German states and which in fact did destroy them. In the GDR historical progress is taking place not at the expense of the working people. Here the fruits of its work and exertions solely benefit the people. What L. I. Brezhnev said in his speech on the 60th anniversary of the October Revolution also applies to the GDR: "Never before have we had such favourable opportunities to master the tasks for the purpose of which the revolution ultimately took place: increasing the prosperity of the masses, developing socialist democracy, and ensuring the all-round development of the personality."<sup>37</sup>



### Notes

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This brief outline of the history of the German Democratic Republic provides an interesting and vivid description of the period from 1945 to the present day. The author makes it clear that all developments were part of a revolutionary process, with the founding of the GDR as the crowning achievement of the liberation from Nazism. While emphasizing the creative role of the working class under the leadership of the Marxist-Leninist party, he points out that the Socialist Party of Germany has been successfully seeking to establish a close alliance with all members of which make their own contribution to their social status. He then provides answers to questions as to the reasons for the GDR's rapid development and its considerable potential. What emerges clearly from the book is that the peace-loving socialist German state is the work of several generations, the work of all of its people, and it is developing in a close alliance with the Soviet Union as an inseparable part of the socialist community.